

Message Notes

“Is There No God?”

2 Kings 1:1-15 (ESV)

May 21, 2017

A Problem Posed: “How Could God . . . ?”

- ◆ **Our Story Can Be Criticized Publicly**
“Besides the unfairness and heartlessness contained in many well-known Christian teachings, the Bible has other violent tales that are opposed to civilized standards of morality.”
(“Some Reasons Why Humanists Reject the Bible” April 2017)
- ◆ **Our Story Can Be Considered Profitably**

The Potentate Periled: “How Could the King . . . ?”

- ◆ **His Advantage**
 - ◆ **God’s Word Available to Him**
 - ◆ **God’s Work with Ahab Before Him**
- ◆ **His Attitude**
He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD and walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He served Baal and worshiped him and provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger in every way that his father had done. (1 Kings 22:52-53)
- ◆ **His Anxiety**
After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel. 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.” (2 Kings 1:1-2)
- ◆ **His Action**
 - ◆ **The God He Shunned (1 Samuel 5)**
“Human beings seek relief from the chaos and the vagaries of life; they strive endlessly to be masters of their own destiny to whatever degree possible. They will turn in almost any direction and pursue any religious cult or philosophical movement that promises to relieve the terror of the unknown.” (Raymond Dillard)
 - ◆ **The “god” He Sought**
 - ◆ **“Lord of a Fly” (Baal-Zebub)**
 - ◆ **Glorious Baal (Baal-Zebul)**
 - ◆ **Chief of Demons (Beelzebub – Matthew 10, 12)**
- ◆ **His Anger**
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? 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. . . . 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, “O man of God, the king says, ‘Come down.’”
(2 Kings 1:3-4, 9)

The Perspective to Possess: “How Could We Not . . . ?”

◆ Rightly Condemn This King

“Some who profess to be shocked and scandalized by God sending fire upon these poor soldiers need to see that the problem was not God’s judgment, but the king’s wickedness.”

(Roger Ellsworth)

◆ Rightly Commend This Captain

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. 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.”

(2 Kings 1:13-14)

◆ Rightly Consider These Questions (Adapted from Raymond Dillard)

“When crisis strikes, where do we first turn for help?”

“Is it fair to judge someone whose environment or upbringing contributed to their evil behavior?”

“Who could be hurt by your transgression?”

“What kind of example do you set for others?”

“Was it just for the prophet to call down fire on these messengers?”

“Think about what it means to approach God humbly, renouncing our pride and asking for mercy. What might result?”