

A hard-hearted King and an angry God.

1 Kings 22:51 – 2 Kings 1:18

Overview: Even when faced with revolt from Moab, and a serious injury, King Ahaziah does not turn to the Lord in repentance. Instead, he continues to harden his heart and foolishly seeks help from a false "god". In an unmistakable display of power (= fire from heaven), the Lord confronts him, to bring him to his senses. The Lord even gives him further time - but he stubbornly refuses the mercy held out to him. Please read the passage and note everything it shows us about Ahaziah.

1. King Ahaziah had a fatal accident and his first thought was for Baal-Zebub. We don't know too much about this idol, the names together mean "lord of the fly" and it was housed at Ekron, one of the major Philistine cities (1 Sam 5:10-12). It seems to be known for the practice of divination (= fortune telling). Today, countless people seek to know their future via horoscopes, psychic hotlines, palm readers and more. Discuss: What is God's view of this? Why is this such a big deal for God? What are the dangers here? (Lev 19:31 and Deut 18:9-12, Eph 6:10-18).
2. Two captains and a hundred soldiers died because of Ahaziah's stubborn refusal to acknowledge that the Lord alone was God. Why should he have known better? (see 1 Kings 17:1 and 18:36-39). What does this show us about how sin works? Please read together Heb 3:12-14 and discuss this further ie how does sin work? What effect does it have on us? What can help us here? In light of this, can we do things better in our Growth Group?
3. While the first two army captains followed Ahaziah in their arrogance, the third did not. In effect "he asked for mercy from God because he asked it from Elijah" (R Dillard, p80). Please discuss together what it means to approach God humbly, putting aside our pride and asking for mercy. How can Heb 12:28,29 and Luke 18:9-14 help?
4. Please read Heb 12:4-12 and discuss how – and why - the Lord may discipline us today. Please keep in mind Jonah (esp Jonah 2:3,4) and Isaiah 59:1,2. In an appropriate way, please share how you have experienced this in your life.

Suggested closing: The beautiful message of the Gospel is that the God we have sinned against; whose love we have spurned; whose Word we have rejected... Is very angry about our sin, so angry that he cannot sweep it aside but, instead, lays it on his Son Jesus. Glory together in this grace. Share together the wonder of this love. Perhaps share Scriptures that are close to your heart. Encourage one another with these truths and pray for one another.