

ELIJAH (4)**2 Chronicles 21:1-6, 11-20; 1 Kings 22:51-53; 2 Kings 1:2-18**

Memory Verse: “For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Deut. 4:24 ESV).

Background Helps:

So far in our study of the prophet Elijah, we have seen him confront the wicked King Ahab. In this week’s readings, we see the prophet confront two more wicked kings.

First, Elijah confronted King Jehoram of the *southern* kingdom of *Judah* (2 Chron. 21:1-6, 11-20). The incident described in these verses is a rare instance in the stories of Elijah and Elisha where one of these prophets interacts with a king of Judah. Their prophetic ministry was mainly to the rulers and people of the *northern* kingdom, *Israel*. King Jehoram’s father, Jehoshaphat, had made a marriage alliance with King Ahab (2 Chron. 18:1), who gave his daughter (Athaliah) to Jehoram to be his wife (2 Chron. 21:6). This alliance resulted in Jehoram “walking in the ways of the kings of Israel.” Apparently, this phrase means that he introduced the worship of Baal into the southern kingdom of Judah. Because of this idolatry, Elijah sent a letter to King Jehoram threatening judgment on him, his family, and the nation of Judah (2 Chron. 21:11-15)—a judgment which came to pass in 2 Chronicles 21:16-20.

Second, Elijah confronted King Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, who succeeded his father as king of the *northern* kingdom, *Israel* (1 Kings 22:51-53; 2 Kings 1:2-18). Here again, the prophet Elijah was sent to announce judgment on this king because he sought the god of Ekron, Baal-zebub instead of the LORD (2 Kings 1:2-8). (Read about Baal-zebub in *Faith in the Face of Apostasy*.¹) This judgment fell first on several military captains whom Ahaziah sent to proudly confront the prophet (1:9-12). (This is the second time that Elijah has called down fire from heaven [cf. 1 Kings 18:24, 36-38]). After Elijah showed mercy to a third captain who approached him with humility (2 Kings 1:13-15), the judgment of God did fall on King Ahaziah, just as Elijah prophesied (1:16-18). The relevant pages from *Faith in the Face of Apostasy* (73-80) cover only this second story.

Lesson Helps:

In adult classes both stories could be covered in your lesson under one aim: My students will learn about God’s judgment on the sin of idolatry, so that they will keep themselves from idols. The two stories illustrate the memory verse: “For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Deut. 4:24 ESV). Another good verse to use: “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21 ESV). Some miscellaneous points:


- A mixed marriage, a believer to an unbeliever, can lead to idolatry (2 Chron. 21:6).
- An ungodly leader can influence others toward idolatry (2 Chron. 21:11, 13).


¹ Raymond B. Dillard, *Faith in the Face of Apostasy* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing Company, 1999), 76-77.

- Idolatry is a heinous sin and brings severe judgment from God (2 Chron. 21:14-20; 1 Kings 22:51-53; 2 Kings 1:2-6, 16-17).
- God is opposed to the proud (2 Kings 1:9-12) but gives grace to the humble (2 Kings 1:13-15). See James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5.
- Identify the idols in our day from which we must flee, in order to avoid God’s judgement (1 John 5:21).
- Jesus “endured the fiery indignation of God [for us] in order that we might have life.”²

In children’s classes you may want to use the same lesson aim as above but draw only from the second story 2 Kings 1. 1 John 5:21, addressed to believers as “little children,” would make a great focal point for your lesson. What “idols” are children tempted to follow instead of the Lord Jesus?

Home Assignment:

 Read 2 Kings 2–3.

 Memorize 2 Timothy 2:2 ESV.

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² Ibid., 79.