

2 Kings 1-2

Good News Translation

Elijah and King Ahaziah

1 After the death of King Ahab of Israel the country of Moab rebelled against Israel.

2 King Ahaziah of Israel fell off the balcony on the roof of his palace in Samaria and was seriously injured. So he sent some messengers to consult Baalzebub, the god of the Philistine city of Ekron, in order to find out whether or not he would recover. **3** But an angel of the Lord commanded Elijah, the prophet from Tishbe, to go and meet the messengers of King Ahaziah and ask them, "Why are you going to consult Baalzebub, the god of Ekron? Is it because you think there is no god in Israel?" **4** Tell the king that the Lord says, "You will not recover from your injuries; you will die!"

Elijah did as the Lord commanded, ⁵ and the messengers returned to the king. “Why have you come back?” he asked.

⁶ They answered, “We were met by a man who told us to come back and tell you that the Lord says to you, ‘Why are you sending messengers to consult Baalzebub, the god of Ekron? Is it because you think there is no god in Israel? You will not recover from your injuries; you will die!’”

⁷ “What did the man look like?” the king asked.

⁸ “He was wearing a cloak made of animal skins, tied with^[a] a leather belt,” they answered.

“It's Elijah!” the king exclaimed.

⁹ Then he sent an officer with fifty men to get Elijah. The officer found him sitting on a hill and said to him, “Man of God, the king orders you to come down.”

10 “If I am a man of God,” Elijah answered, “may fire come down from heaven and kill you and your men!” At once fire came down and killed the officer and his men.

11 The king sent another officer with fifty men, who went up^[b] and said to Elijah, “Man of God, the king orders you to come down at once!”

12 “If I am a man of God,” Elijah answered, “may fire come down from heaven and kill you and your men!” At once the fire of God came down and killed the officer and his men.

13 Once more the king sent an officer with fifty men. He went up the hill, fell on his knees in front of Elijah, and pleaded, “Man of God, be merciful to me and my men. Spare our lives! 14 The two other officers and their men were killed by fire from heaven; but please be merciful to me!”

15 The angel of the Lord said to Elijah, “Go down with him, and don't be afraid.” So Elijah went with the officer to the king 16 and said to him, “This is what the Lord says: ‘Because you sent messengers to consult Baalzebub, the god of Ekron—as if there were no god in Israel to consult—you will not get well; you will die!’”

17 Ahaziah died, as the Lord had said through Elijah. Ahaziah had no sons, so his brother^[c] Joram succeeded him as king in the second year of the reign of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

18 Everything else that King Ahaziah did is recorded in *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

Elijah Is Taken Up to Heaven

2 The time came for the Lord to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind. Elijah and Elisha set out from Gilgal, 2 and on the way Elijah said to Elisha, “Now stay here; the Lord has ordered me to go to Bethel.”

But Elisha answered, “I swear by my loyalty to the living Lord and to you that I will not leave you.” So they went on to Bethel.

3 A group of prophets who lived there went to Elisha and asked him, “Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master away from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” Elisha answered. “But let's not talk about it.”

4 Then Elijah said to Elisha, “Now stay here; the Lord has ordered me to go to Jericho.”

But Elisha answered, “I swear by my loyalty to the living Lord and to you that I will not leave you.” So they went on to Jericho.

5 A group of prophets who lived there went to Elisha and asked him, “Do you know that the Lord is going to take your master away from you today?”

“Yes, I know,” Elisha answered. “But let's not talk about it.”

6 Then Elijah said to Elisha, “Now stay here; the Lord has ordered me to go to the Jordan River.”

But Elisha answered, “I swear by my loyalty to the living Lord and to you that I will not leave you.” So they went on, 7 and fifty of the prophets followed them to the Jordan. Elijah and Elisha stopped by the river, and the fifty prophets stood a short distance away. 8 Then Elijah took off his cloak, rolled it up, and struck the water with it; the water divided, and he and Elisha crossed to the other side on dry ground. 9 There, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what you want me to do for you before I am taken away.”

“Let me receive the share of your power that will make me your successor,”^[d] Elisha answered.

10 “That is a difficult request to grant,” Elijah replied. “But you will receive it if you see me as I am being taken away from you; if you don't see me, you won't receive it.”

11 They kept talking as they walked on; then suddenly a chariot of fire pulled by horses of fire came between them, and Elijah was taken up to heaven by a whirlwind. 12 Elisha saw it and cried out to Elijah, “My father, my father! Mighty defender of Israel! You are gone!” And he never saw Elijah again.

In grief Elisha tore his cloak in two. 13 Then he picked up Elijah's cloak that had fallen from him, and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14 He struck the water with Elijah's cloak and said, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” Then he struck the water again, and it divided, and he walked over to the other side. 15 The fifty prophets from Jericho saw

him and said, “The power of Elijah is on Elisha!” They went to meet him, bowed down before him, 16 and said, “There are fifty of us here, all strong men. Let us go and look for your master. Maybe the spirit of the Lord has carried him away and left him on some mountain or in some valley.”

“No, you must not go,” Elisha answered.

17 But they insisted until he gave in and let them go. The fifty of them went and looked high and low for Elijah for three days, but didn't find him. 18 Then they returned to Elisha, who had waited at Jericho, and he said to them, “Didn't I tell you not to go?”

Miracles of Elisha

19 Some men from Jericho went to Elisha and said, “As you know, sir, this is a fine city, but the water is bad and causes miscarriages.”

20 “Put some salt in a new bowl and bring it to me,” he ordered. They brought it to him, 21 and he went to the spring, threw the salt in the water, and said, “This is what the Lord says: ‘I make this water pure, and it will not cause any more deaths or miscarriages.’” 22 And that water has been pure ever since, just as Elisha said it would be.

23 Elisha left Jericho to go to Bethel, and on the way some boys came out of a town and made fun of him. “Get out of here, baldy!” they shouted.

24 Elisha turned around, glared at them, and cursed them in the name of the Lord. Then two she-bears came out of the woods and tore forty-two of the boys to pieces.

25 Elisha went on to Mount Carmel and later returned to Samaria.

Acts 13:42-14:7

Good News Translation

42 As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to come back the next Sabbath and tell them more about these things. 43 After the people had left the meeting, Paul and Barnabas were followed by many Jews and by many Gentiles who had been converted to Judaism. The apostles spoke to them and encouraged them to keep on living in the grace of God.

44 The next Sabbath nearly everyone in the town came to hear the word of the Lord. 45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy; they disputed what Paul was saying and insulted him. 46 But Paul and Barnabas spoke out even more boldly: "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. But since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we will leave you and go to the Gentiles. 47 For this is the commandment that the Lord has given us:

‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles,
so that all the world may be saved.’”

48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and praised the Lord's message; and those who had been chosen for eternal life became believers.

49 The word of the Lord spread everywhere in that region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the leading men of the city and the Gentile women of high social standing who worshiped God. They started a persecution against Paul and Barnabas and threw them out of their region. 51 The apostles shook the dust off their feet in protest against them and went on to Iconium. 52 The believers in Antioch were full of joy and the Holy Spirit.

In Iconium

14 The same thing happened in Iconium: Paul and Barnabas went to the synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of Jews and

Gentiles became believers. 2 But the Jews who would not believe stirred up the Gentiles and turned them against the believers. 3 The apostles stayed there for a long time, speaking boldly about the Lord, who proved that their message about his grace was true by giving them the power to perform miracles and wonders. 4 The people of the city were divided: some were for the Jews, others for the apostles.

5 Then some Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, decided to mistreat the apostles and stone them. 6 When the apostles learned about it, they fled to the cities of Lystra and Derbe in Lycaonia and to the surrounding territory. 7 There they preached the Good News.

Psalm 139

Good News Translation

God's Complete Knowledge and Care^[a]

139

Lord, you have examined me and you know me.

2

You know everything I do;

from far away you understand all my thoughts.

3

You see me, whether I am working or resting;

you know all my actions.

4

Even before I speak,

you already know what I will say.

5

You are all around me on every side;

you protect me with your power.

6

Your knowledge of me is too deep;
it is beyond my understanding.

7

Where could I go to escape from you?
Where could I get away from your presence?

8

If I went up to heaven, you would be there;
if I lay down in the world of the dead, you would be there.

9

If I flew away beyond the east
or lived in the farthest place in the west,

10

you would be there to lead me,
you would be there to help me.

11

I could ask the darkness to hide me
or the light around me to turn into night,

12

but even darkness is not dark for you,
and the night is as bright as the day.
Darkness and light are the same to you.

13

You created every part of me;
you put me together in my mother's womb.

14

I praise you because you are to be feared;
all you do is strange and wonderful.
I know it with all my heart.

15

When my bones were being formed,
carefully put together in my mother's womb,

when I was growing there in secret,
you knew that I was there—

16

you saw me before I was born.

The days allotted to me

had all been recorded in your book,
before any of them ever began.

17

O God, how difficult I find your thoughts;^[b]
how many of them there are!

18

If I counted them, they would be more than the grains of sand.
When I awake, I am still with you.

19

O God, how I wish you would kill the wicked!
How I wish violent people would leave me alone!

20

They say wicked things about you;
they speak evil things against your name.^[c]

21

O Lord, how I hate those who hate you!
How I despise those who rebel against you!

22

I hate them with a total hatred;
I regard them as my enemies.

23

Examine me, O God, and know my mind;
test me, and discover my thoughts.

24

Find out if there is any evil in me
and guide me in the everlasting way.^[d]

Proverbs 17:19-21

Good News Translation

19 To like sin is to like making trouble. If you brag all the time,^[a] you are asking for trouble.

20 Anyone who thinks and speaks evil can expect to find nothing good—only disaster.

21 There is nothing but sadness and sorrow for parents whose children do foolish things.

Tobit 6:16-17

Good News Translation

16 When you go into the bedroom, take the fish's heart and liver with you and place them on the burning incense, 17 so that the odor will spread throughout the room. When the demon smells it, he will leave and never come near Sarah again. But before you consummate the marriage, both of you must get up and pray for the Lord in heaven to be merciful to you and to protect you. Don't be afraid. Sarah was meant to be yours from the beginning of creation. You will rescue her from the demon, and she will go with you to your home. You and Sarah will have many children, whom you will love very much. So don't worry!

Tobias listened very carefully to what Raphael had to say. He knew that Sarah was a relative on his father's side of the family. He began to fall in love with her and looked forward to marrying her.