



KING AHAZIAH CONSULTS A PSYCHIC!

After King Ahab died, King Ahaziah, his successor, "did evil in the sight of the Lord". Here is the story:

"Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick; and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease. 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 unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to inquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die." 2 Kings 1:2-4.

In this narrative we have a most striking display of the divine displeasure against those who turn from God to Satanic agencies. A short time previous to the events here recorded, the kingdom of Israel had changed rulers. Ahab had fallen under the judgment of God, and had been succeeded by his son Ahaziah, a worthless character, who did only evil in the sight of the Lord, walking in the ways of his father and mother, and causing Israel to sin. He worshiped Baal, and provoked the God of Israel to anger, as his father Ahab had done. But judgments followed close upon the sins of the rebellious king. A war with Moab, and then the accident by which his own life was threatened, attested the wrath of God against Ahaziah.

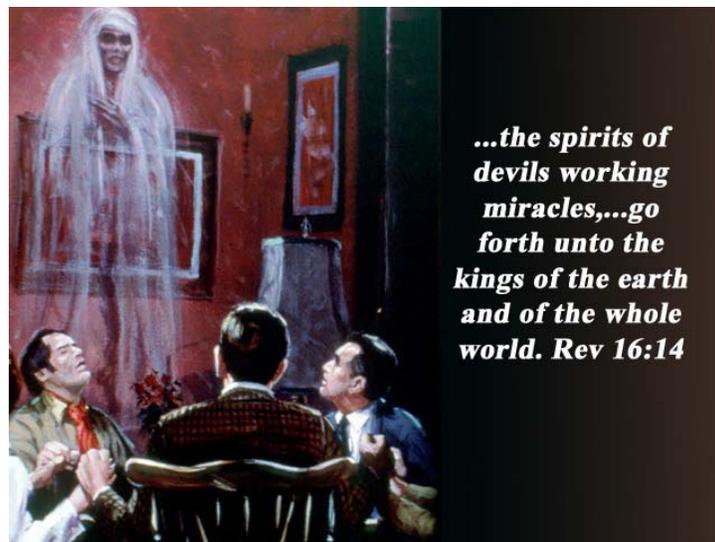
In his father's time this wicked king of Israel had heard and seen much of the wondrous works of the Most High. What terrible evidence of his severity and jealousy had God given his apostate people! And yet Ahaziah acted as though these awful realities, and even the fearful end of his own father, were only an idle tale. Instead of humbling his heart before the Lord, he ventured upon the most daring act of impiety which marked his life. He commanded his servants, "Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease."

This idol was supposed, through the medium of its priests, to give information concerning future events. It had obtained such general credence that it was resorted to by large numbers

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from a considerable distance. The predictions there uttered, and the information given, proceeded directly from the prince of darkness. It is he who instituted, and still maintains, the worship of idols, as a means of diverting the minds of men from God.

The story of Ahaziah's sin and punishment contains a lesson of warning which none can disregard with impunity. The very spirit of heathen idolatry is rife to-day, though under the influence of science and education it has assumed a more refined and attractive form. Though we do not pay homage to heathen gods, yet thousands in civilized and Christian countries are worshipping at Satan's shrine as verily as did the king of Israel. Every day adds sorrowful evidence that faith in the sure word of prophecy is decreasing, and that in its stead superstition and Satanic witchery are captivating the minds of men. All who do not earnestly search the Scriptures, and submit every desire and purpose of life to that unerring test, all who do not seek God in prayer for a knowledge of his will, will surely wander from the right path, and fall under the deception of Satan.



The mystic voices that spoke at Ekron and Endor are still, by their lying words, misleading the children of men. The prince of darkness has but appeared under a new guise. The heathen oracles of ages long past have their counterpart in the spiritualistic mediums, the clairvoyants and fortune-tellers of to-day. The mysteries of heathen worship are replaced by the secret associations and séances, the obscurities and wonders, of the sorcerers of our time. And their disclosures are eagerly received by thousands who refuse to accept light from the word or the Spirit of God. They speak with scorn of the magicians of old, while the great deceiver laughs in triumph as they yield to his arts under a different form.

These Satanic agents claim to cure disease, They attribute their power to electricity, magnetism, or the so-called "sympathetic remedies," while in truth they are but channels for Satan's electric currents. By this means he casts his spell over the bodies and souls of men.

God has made it our duty to preserve our physical powers in the best possible condition, that we may render to him acceptable service. He has placed it in our power to obtain a knowledge of the laws of health. Those who refuse to make use of the knowledge that has been

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mercifully placed within their reach, are rejecting one of the means which God has granted them to promote spiritual as well as physical life.

Many are unwilling to put forth the effort that is necessary in order to obtain a knowledge of the laws of life, and the simple means to be used for the restoration of health. They do not place themselves in right relations to life. When sickness comes as the result of their transgressions of natural law, they do not seek to correct their errors, and then ask the blessing of God on their course.

Not a few, in this Christian age and Christian nation, resort to mediums rather than trust to the power of the living God. The mother, watching by the sick-bed of her child, exclaims, "I can do no more. Is there no physician who has power to restore my child?" She is told of the wonderful cures performed by some clairvoyant or magnetic healer, and she trusts her dear one to his charge, placing it as verily in the hands of Satan as though he were standing by her side. And in how many instances is the future life of the child controlled by a Satanic power which it seems impossible to break!

Again: I have heard a mother pleading with some infidel physician to save the life of her child; but when I entreated her to seek help from the Great Physician, who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto him in faith, she turned away with impatience. Here we see the same spirit that was manifested by Ahaziah. The Lord our God assures us that he is waiting to be gracious; he invites us to call upon him in the day of trouble. How can we turn from him to trust in an arm of flesh?

Ahaziah sent his servants to inquire of Baal-zebub at Ekron; but instead of a message from the idol, he heard the awful denunciation from the God of Israel: "Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die." The Lord had cause to be greatly displeased at Ahaziah's impiety. What had he not done to win the hearts of sinful men, and to inspire them with unwavering confidence in his care and affection? For ages he had visited his people with manifestations of the most condescending kindness and unexampled love. From the times of the patriarchs, he had shown that his "delights were with the sons of men." He had been a very present help to all who sought him in sincerity. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity he redeemed them." Yet Israel had revolted from God, and the king turned for help to the Lord's worst enemy.

The Hebrews were the only nation favored with a knowledge of the true God. And when the king sent to inquire of a pagan oracle, he proclaimed to the heathen that he had more confidence in their idols than in the God of his people, the Creator of the heavens and the earth. In the same manner do those who profess to have a knowledge of God's word dishonor him when they turn from the Source of strength and wisdom to ask help or counsel from some agent of the power of darkness.

Why is it that men are so unwilling to trust Him who created man, who can, by a touch, a word, a look, heal all manner of disease? Who is more worthy of our confidence than the One who made so great a sacrifice for our redemption? If the professed followers of Christ would exercise an intelligent, consistent faith in the promises of God, instead of placing so much

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confidence in deceitful agencies, they would realize in soul and body the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit.

There is danger in departing in the least degree from the Lord's instruction. When we deviate from the plain path of duty, a train of circumstances will arise that seems irresistibly to draw us farther and farther from the right. Needless intimacies with those who have no respect for God will seduce us ere we are aware. Fear of offending worldly friends will deter us from expressing our gratitude to God or acknowledging our dependence upon him. We must keep close to the word of God. We need its warnings and encouragements, its threatenings and its promises. We need the perfect example that we find only in the life and character of our Saviour.

Angels of God will preserve his people while they walk in the path of duty; but there is no assurance of such protection for those who deliberately venture upon Satan's ground. An agent of the great deceiver will say and do anything to gain his object. These workers of iniquity are not few; and their path is marked by desolated homes, blasted reputations, and broken hearts. But of all this the world knows little; and Satan exults in the ruin that has been wrought.

Those who give themselves up to the sorcery of Satan may be able to boast of great benefit received thereby; but does this prove their course to be wise or safe? What if life should be prolonged or temporal gain secured? Will it pay in the end to disregard the will of God? Oh, no; all such apparent gain will at the last prove an irrecoverable loss.

No man can serve two masters. Light and darkness are no more opposites than are the service of God and the service of Satan. The prophet Elijah presented the matter in the true light when he appealed to apostate Israel: "If the Lord be God, serve him; but if Baal, then serve him."

We cannot with impunity break down a single barrier which God has erected to guard his people from Satan's power. Our only safety consists in preserving the ancient landmarks. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."