

Sermon Series: “Becoming God’s Humble Hero: Elijah”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—9/9/2007

Title: “Watch Out for the Real Enemy”

Text: 2 Kings 1

Into.: *Illus.: the not so obvious*

Theme: God’s calling to us to move out of the darkness and to walk in the light is a complete renouncing of Satan’s wicked ways and power and throwing our allegiance to the Lord of Life as our deliverance and power.

*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light. For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth. And find out what pleases the Lord. Ephesians 5: 8-10*

### **Moving out of the shadows into the light**

- Recognizing the destruction of running in *the shadowland of the father of lies*
  1. **Ills.: Pamplona, Spain running of the Bulls — why do they do it?**
  2. *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44*
  3. Ahaziah, Ahab’s son, knew the way of God versus the way of evil
    - a. The context of sin and evil in our lives (**Print and read 1 Kings 22: 51-53**)
    - b. Lord’s hand of blessing had been withdrawn from Ahaziah, in response to his drift to evil (**Print 2Kings 1: 1-2**)
    - c. *But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. Deut. 30:17-18*
    - d. **Ills.: What don’t we get?**
  4. Walking in open rebellion against the Lord Ahaziah went out of his way to consult the occult
    - a. Baal-Zebub (Lord of flies), Philistine god (fly image bring both disease and take them away)
    - b. *Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God. Lev 19:31*
    - c. Baal-Zebul (prince of demons) real power behind idol (*Do I mean then that a sacrifice offered to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 1 Cor. 10:19-20*)
- The mark of a believer and disciple of Jesus is one who will have nothing to do with the world of the occult
  1. Don’t dabble in or consult present day “Baal-zebubs” – occult, astrology, Satanism, virtual shamanism
  2. *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10*
  3. **Ills.: Deceptive mirage**
  4. Take the spiritually courageous step of separation (**Read Acts 19: 17-20**)

### **Turning from the darkness of pride to the light of humbleness in the Lord**

- Avoiding a grudge match with God (**Print and read 2 Kings 1: 3-12**)
  1. Ahaziah is ticked off at God and His man for meddling in his life and affairs
    - a. Disdainful attitude toward Elijah as God’s spokesman (vs.7-8)
    - b. A haughty attitude infecting captains (9b, 11b) sentenced two companies of soldiers to their destruction (vs.9-12)
  2. Forgetting that everything we are/have belongs to God, we slide into a prideful spirit and make destructive choices
    - a. **Ills.: Arm wrestling with your dad**
    - b. What destruction are we bringing on ourselves and families as we arm wrestle with God
    - c. **Print and read James 4: 6-10**
- Humbleness before the Lord

1. The third captain did come demanding but pleading for mercy (**Print 2 Kings 1: 13-15**)
2. The very nature of God is to respond in mercy to a humbled heart
  - a. *'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?'* Ezekiel 33: 11
  - b. *For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. John 3: 17-18*
3. Letting the Lord write a different ending to the story of your life
  - a. Ahaziah never turned back to the Lord of Life and his life ended like a forgotten postscript (**Print vss. 16-18**)
  - b. God wants to write your story with a different ending (*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Jer 29: 11. )*

### **The not so obvious**

- 1) How long did the Hundred Years War last?
- 2) Which country makes Panama hats?
- 3) From which animal do we get catgut?
- 4) In which month do Russians celebrate the October Revolution?
- 5) What is a camel's-hair brush made of?
- 6) The Canary Islands in the Pacific are named after what animal?
- 7) What was King George VI's first name?
- 8) What color is a purple finch?
- 9) Where are Chinese gooseberries from?
- 10) How long did the Thirty Years War last?

Answers To The Quiz: 1) 116 years, from 1337 to 1453. 2) Ecuador. 3) From sheep and horses. 4) November. The Russian calendar was 13 days behind ours. 5) Squirrel fur. 6) The Latin name was Insularia Canaria -- Island of the Dogs. 7) Albert. When he came to the throne, in 1936 he respected the wish of Queen Victoria that no future king should ever be called Albert. 8) Distinctively crimson. 9) New Zealand. 10) Thirty years, of course. From 1618 to 1648.

### **What don't we get?**

Some people never learn, do they? The newspapers run story after story about people who get killed trying to beat the train across the tracks, yet many still try it. Each year in the United States alone, more than 400,000 smokers die an awful death from their habit, but people continue to light up. Hundreds of thousands of children watch their parents die from years of drug or alcohol abuse, but many of them turn around and become addicts themselves. Much like Ahab's son Ahaziah. He surely knew of his father's encounters with Elijah--how the kingdom had suffered under a drought for three long years. How Elijah's God had thoroughly shown up Baal. How Baal's prophets had been slaughtered at Elijah's command. How Elijah's final prophecy about Ahab's death had come to pass, right down to the dogs licking up his blood. He had seen the one true God work directly with his family But did he learn from this? Nope.

### **Deceptive mirage**

In July of 2004, the Arizona Game and Fish Department began nursing more than 30 emaciated, dehydrated, banged-up pelicans. During the previous two weeks, the injured pelicans had been found from Yuma to Phoenix. The brown pelicans were injured when they descended from the sky, sailed low over sidewalks and asphalt highways, stretched out their feet as though to make a perfect splash landing in water, and then tumbled end over end when they instead hit the pavement. The pelicans, apparently suffering a food shortage in California, flew to Arizona looking for fish. From the sky, the shimmering hot air over the black asphalt

appeared to the Pelicans like water. Down they flew for fish and a refreshing dip in a lake. What they found instead was solid pavement, dehydration, hunger, and near death. Reality hits hard. Thankfully, the Arizona Game and Fish Department came to their rescue. **Benjamin Larson, Washington D.C. and Craig Brian Larson, Arlington Heights, IL; source: Associated Press, "Pelicans Mistake Arizona Asphalt for Lakes," CNN.com (posted 7-12-04) (viewed 7-13-04)**

### **1 Kings 22: 51-53**

<sup>51</sup>Ahaziah son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. <sup>52</sup>He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, because he walked in the ways of his father and mother and in the ways of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. <sup>53</sup>He served and worshiped Baal and provoked the LORD, the God of Israel, to anger, just as his father had done.

### **Acts 19:17-20**

When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor. <sup>18</sup>Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. <sup>19</sup>A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. <sup>20</sup>In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

### **James 4:6-10**

<sup>6</sup>But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." <sup>7</sup>Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. <sup>9</sup>Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

## 2 Kings 1:1-18

<sup>1</sup>After Ahab's death, Moab rebelled against Israel. <sup>2</sup>Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers, saying to them, "Go and consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury."

<sup>3</sup>But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Go up and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' <sup>4</sup>Therefore this is what the LORD says: 'You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!' " So Elijah went. <sup>5</sup>When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, "Why have you come back?" <sup>6</sup>"A man came to meet us," they replied. "And he said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you and tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending men to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!' " <sup>7</sup>The king asked them, "What kind of man was it who came to meet you and told you this?" <sup>8</sup>They replied, "He was a man with a garment of hair and with a leather belt around his waist." The king said, "That was Elijah the Tishbite."

<sup>9</sup>Then he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. The captain went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down!' " <sup>10</sup>Elijah answered the captain, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!" Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men. <sup>11</sup>At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, "Man of God, this is what the king says, 'Come down at once!' " <sup>12</sup>"If I am a man of God," Elijah replied, "may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!" Then the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

<sup>13</sup>So the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. This third captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. "Man of God," he begged, "please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants!" <sup>14</sup>See, fire has fallen from heaven and consumed the first two captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!" <sup>15</sup>The angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king.

<sup>16</sup>He told the king, "This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel for you to consult that you have sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!" <sup>17</sup>So he died, according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. Because Ahaziah had no son, Joram succeeded him as king in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. <sup>18</sup>As for all the other events of Ahaziah's reign, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?