

# Divine Governance

1 Kings 22:51-53; 2 Kings 1:1-18

Our passage today speaks about God's providential care as He governs nations and His people. It is under His divine governance that the northern kingdom was plagued with no rain for 3 ½ years. It is also under God's divine governance that the nation of Moab is allowed to revolt against Israel.

1 Kings 22:51-53 says,

“Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. <sup>52</sup> And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: <sup>53</sup> For he served Baal, and worshipped him, **and provoked to anger the LORD God of Israel, according to all that his father had done.**

“Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab . . .” 2 Kings 1:1

Many of us many have heard or read the term governance as it is used in the news today.

Governance means, “the action or manner of governing. The World Bank defines governance as “The manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country . . .”

Governance is what a governing body does. It refers to the way rules are set and implemented. Literally, governance comes from the Greek the word, κυβερνάω (kubenaō) meaning, “to steer.”

Governance can refer to the act or manner of governing at any level, local, state, federal or global. But even beyond the natural level, there is divine governance. In the supreme sense of the word, it refers to the manner in which God exercises His power and authority in managing His creation.

Governance is what God providentially does as He sustains all of creation, implementing His rules and governing their affect on His universe, nature, nations and people.

In the case of this morning's passage 2 Kings 1:1-2 we find God's providential deals when it says,

“Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab. And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria and was sick . . .”

God governs both the nations and His people. He is in control of national events as well as personal trials. This passage highlights both - Moab's revolt against Israel and Ahaziah's trial.

1. God frequently punishes the wicked after the similitude of there sins. In our present passage, King Ahab's son, Ahaziah
  - a. Turned from God,
  - b. Then Moab rebel against Israel.
  - c. Do you see the correlation?

In the same fashion that king Ahaziah and the nation of Israel rebelled and turned away from God, God allowed Moab to rebel and turn away from Ahaziah and the nation of Israel. They turned from God so . . . others under the king and nation turned from them.

- d. God frequently punishes the wicked after the similitude of there sins.
- e. The personal trial of Ahaziah is also part of God's providential care. In fact, Ahaziah was so seriously injured in this fall, he was wondering if he would recover.
- f. It was an affliction designed to stop Ahaziah's rebellion. It is also part of God's mercy and grace by giving Ahaziah time to repent. Nations have a temporal existence while men have an eternal destiny. God deals with nations and men accordingly.

Proverbs 16:7 speaks of God's governance over national calamity when it says,

“When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.”

It also implies the opposite side of this truth. When our ways displease God, evil from every quarter may menace us.

Our temporal as well as spiritual prosperity depends entirely on God's blessing. So when national tragedy or personal tragedy befall us, it should cause us to examine our conduct toward God.

2. God's providential governance of nations is revealed in this passage.
  - a. Unlike men, nations have only a temporal existence. Nations begin and nations end. Men of the other hand have an eternal destiny. God deals with both men and nations with their end and purpose in view. So when we are viewing God's providential dealings with the nations, their prosperity or adversity is determined by nations attitude and conduct toward God.
  - b. Even today, our national prosperity or adversity is determined by our attitude and conduct toward God. God deals directly with nations, which have his living Word in their hands. God deals indirectly with nations without His living Word - Their case is often dealt with and determined by their conduct towards people.
3. Furthermore, God generally gauges and judges nations by the character of the nations leaders, and not by the general behavior of its people.
  - a. God does this because both the character of the national leaders and the general behavior of the people are related. When the majority of the people are pious, they will not tolerate wickedness in high places for long.
  - b. On the other hand, when those who lead set an unchecked example of evil, it is then a reflection of the nations heart. Those who continually follow corrupt leadership usually are not any better than their leaders.
4. Regardless the form of government. Regardless the party or power in control.

It is the character and enactments of the executives that are the deciding factor in God's providential dealings. For they, (the leaders) hold the positions of chief responsibility in the sight of God.
5. Therefore, in Christian countries where the majority of people claim Christ, then the local churches are to regulate the pulse of the nation.

They are to act as the “salt” in the nation. When their ways please the Lord, He gives them favor in the eyes of those around them.

When the Holy Spirit is unhindered, His power is manifested within the faithful community. When Christianity is lived out in the lives of God’s people, their conduct will restrain sin within non-believing community by . . . **causing the machine of the state to support godliness.**

6. But when error comes into the local assemblies and God’s truth is relaxed, the Holy Spirit is grieved, His power is withheld and God’s hand of blessing is removed.
  - a. Then the affects of our wayward conduct become apparent by the rising tide of lawlessness. When the corporate body of Christ fails to uphold God’s righteousness, then His hand of blessing is removed.
  - b. This is the order that occurs when a nation or individuals turns from God to follow their ways. Then there is the disturbance of peace, social revolution and eventually international war.

In our text, Ahaziah served Baal and worshipped him and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel.

1. 2 Kings 1:1 “Then Moab rebelled . . .
2. We must not lose sight of the context. Even though 1 Kings 22:21-23 and 2 Kings 1:1 appear to be separated, they are all part of the same context.
3. For many years Moab had been paying tribute to Israel, but now they (Moab) are throwing off their yoke.

Are we not seeing this happen in our day? Does it not seem like one nation after another is severing their ties with us? Are not radical groups from every corner of the world rising up against us?

4. The Bible is not just a compilation of stories of yester years, with no relevance to our day. It’s history reveals God’s character and nature and His divine governance of His creation.

God was so provoked by Israel’s conduct and Ahaziah’s leadership, that He moved Moab to break away from Israel, and at the same time he afflicted Ahaziah.

5. 2 Kings 1:1 - "Then . . .

6. 2 Kings 1:2 - "And . . .

a. Ahaziah did not take up arms to restore order. He remained at home.

There was no returning to God, no humbling of himself or the nation. He remained in his luxury and easy living rather than taking up the head of the army and dealing with the insurrection.

b. Ahaziah knew what was wrong but refused to turn to God.

7. In the same breath, God's word says,

"And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick."

In other words he was seriously afflicted with life threatening injuries.

a. But what did Ahaziah do? - 2 Kings 1:2b

"He sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease."

b. God was granting Ahaziah time, while on his sick bed, to reflect on all that was going on; providing room for him to repent. He had his international affairs crumbling and his personal life in jeopardy. God allowed all this to remind him of his finiteness. Yet, what does he do? He turns to Baal-zebub to the God of Ekron, the god of the underworld.

c. To whom do we turn as a nation when afflicted? Do we turn to the military, the police, and the media for more information or do we turn to God? Do we examine ourselves?

Who do we turn to when afflicted in our personal life? Do we scorn God or seek Him?

Do we tend to blame God for His perceived absences or do we search our souls for whatever unconfessed sins we have placed between Him and us?

8. But the all-knowing God sent the Angel of the Lord to Elijah, the Tishbite.
- a. Fourteen years have past since Elijah prayed that there would be no rain. Ten and one half years have past since Elijah faced the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel.

And eight years have passed since Elijah's last recorded visit to the royal family. There he pronounced the certain doom that would come to Ahab, Jezebel and their children.

- b. In this visit we find the combination of God's judgment and mercy. Judgment, in that Ahaziah will die, mercy in that Ahaziah is given time to repent.

Remember, nations begin and end. Their existence is temporal. But on the other hand, men have an eternal destiny. God does not want any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

2 Kings 1:3-4 "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 Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? <sup>4</sup> Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die.' And Elijah departed."

- c. Nothing escapes the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. He is forever aware of all our ways. Though He will judge sin, He is willing and ready to forgive, if we but repent and turn again to Him.

9. The hardening of sin is apparent in this passage.

- a. What does Ahaziah do? - 2 Kings 1:8
- b. He says with hatred,

"It is Elijah, the Tishbite,"

And then orders troops to seize Elijah. As if killing Elijah would change the course of things.

10. 2 Kings 1:9-10 - The hardness of the nation is seen in this passage.

Again, it has been fourteen years since Elijah prayed that it not rain, and it did not rain for 3½-years. At the end of the famine Elijah prayed again and God sent fire to consume the sacrifice at Mt. Carmel. The nation was so stunned, that they destroyed the 450 prophets of Baal, and praised Jehovah.

But now, the king is sending his troops to take the great prophet Elijah, and do him harm. Oh, how short are our memories.

11. 2 Kings 1:11-12 - I can understand the king sending his troops to take Elijah one time, but not twice. This just shows how hard the king and his troops were.
  - a. Remember, God had already shown Himself as all knowing, and a few hours before, God demonstrated his power over the armies of men. But this did not stop Ahaziah from sending the second set of troops.

Did they blame Elijah for destroying those soldiers as if he were a terrorist? Did they overlook the fact that Elijah could no more bring fire down from heaven any more than they?

- b. The soldiers were not innocent either, they were not performing a military duty against a man, but they were openly fighting against Heaven.
12. 2 Kings 1:13-15
  - a. The hardness of Ahaziah is revealing that “the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their hearts while they live.” - Eccl. 9:3
  - b. What a tragedy for Ahaziah to receive the message of the Lord and to go from his bed to and eternity in hell.

13. Does this not remind us of that day that the Lord Jesus Christ will return with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” 2 Thess. 1:7, 8.

Will not the unredeemed be hardened in their unbelief, and arrogant in their defiance against the Lord in the last days? Will they not fight in open rebellion against the governance of the Lord?