

Commentary on 1 Kings chapters 19 and 20, by Chuck Smith 9.28.22

Pastor John Donovan, cell phone 508-380-0471

Pastor Terry Gerlarneau, cell phone 603-455-4399

Web site todbc.org email us at opendoorbiblechurch@todbc.org

September memory verse: Romans 6:14-18 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

¹⁵ What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!

¹⁶ Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness?

¹⁷ But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered.

¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

Commentary on 1 Kings chapters 19 and 20, by Chuck Smith 9.28.22

Chapter 19

So Ahab told his wife Jezebel the whole story of what had happened, what Elijah did, and how he killed all of her prophets with the sword. And Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, and she said, So let the gods do to me, and even more also, if I don't make your life like the life of those prophets by tomorrow this time. And when he got the message from Jezebel, he got up, and he began to run for his life, and he came all the way to Beersheba, [which is about eighty miles, eighty-five miles south from this area,] and he left his servant there ([1Ki 19:1-3](#)).

Probably so bushed he couldn't go on any further.

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, he came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested that he might die; he said, It is enough; now, O LORD, [I've had it] take away my life, slay me, I'm through ([1Ki 19:4](#)).

Now this is, you know, out of a distraught condition. You're all upset. And it's interesting how that when we are so upset, we oftentimes say things we don't really mean. You know, you get real upset and you just say things you don't really mean. Afterwards you're even sorry that you said them many times. But I was just upset so I just you know didn't really engage my brain. I just let my mouth run and I said these things. But I really didn't mean them. You know a lot of times we say things that we don't really mean. We ought to be really more careful with our speech. You know, you say to your child, "Get back in this house or I'll knock your head off." You really don't mean that.

Commentary on 1 Kings chapters 19 and 20, by Chuck Smith 9.28.22

The prophet is saying, "Lord, slay me, I've had it. I'm through. Just kill me, Lord. I don't want to go any further." If he wanted to die, he didn't have to run. He could have stayed right back there in Jezreel and Jezebel would have taken care of it very gladly. So the very fact that he was running showed that he wanted to survive. That was the whole purpose of the flight is to get away from the threat of Jezebel to kill him.

And so he went to sleep and when he woke up, the angel was there, [had prepared a meal for him,] and said, Come on and eat ([1Ki 19:5](#)).

Because you're going to go a long way on this food. So he had angel's food and it lasted for forty days. Good stuff. Very nutritious. He went forty days on the strength of that meat.

And he came to Horeb the mountain of God ([1Ki 19:8](#)).

Down in the Sinai, way down. Man, he's really fleeing from her. Down in the barren wilderness, Mount Sinai or Mount Horeb, both names given to this mount, the mountain where Moses met God and received the 10 Commandments.

And he came to a cave, and he stayed there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him [there in the cave], and said unto him, What are you doing here, Elijah? ([1Ki 19:9](#))

Now Elijah didn't really understand the question. The question was, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And Elijah answered why he was there, not what he was doing there, but why he was there.

He said, I've been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because Israel has really turned against God, they have forsaken His covenant, they have broken down His altars, they have slain His prophets; and I'm the only one left; and they're even looking for me to kill me ([1Ki 19:10](#)).

How bad can things get? The nation Israel in total apostasy. They have forsaken the Lord, broken down His altars, killed His prophets. Only one prophet left and they're looking for him. Now that is Elijah's overstatement of the case because he is so upset and discouraged.

And that's one thing about discouragement and despair, it causes you to overstate the case so it actually looks worse than it really is. You know, we get so discouraged and so despondent, we don't want anyone to cheer us up. I just want sympathy at this point. This is so bad. No one's ever had it this bad, you know, and we always are overstating then the case, as Elijah was actually overstating the case of the problems in Israel. They've killed all of Your prophets and I, only I am left, and they're looking for me to kill me. "God, You don't have a single one left in Israel." That isn't quite right, Elijah, but

Commentary on 1 Kings chapters 19 and 20, by Chuck Smith 9.28.22

you're upset and I understand, you know. You get so down that you just can't see any glimmer of hope, any light.

The Lord said, Elijah, come on out here and stand here on the mount. [So Elijah came out to the entrance of the cave and he stood there] and there came this fierce wind whipping through there, tearing rocks loose, [rolling down the hillside]; but God wasn't in the wind: Then there came this earthquake, [just shook the whole place]; God wasn't in the earthquake: then there came a fire just raging through, God wasn't in the fire: then there came a still small voice ([1Ki 19:11-12](#)).

You know, quite often we miss the voice of God because we are anticipating God to speak in such, you know, great thunderous tones or in such a mystic way. I say, "Well, the Lord spoke to me."

"Oh, how did He speak?" My, the voice of God must really rumble like thunder or something, you know. And we think that when God is leading us that there must be something almost like a trance experience where I become, you know, almost in this trance and I hear a little sign saying, "Beep, beep, beep, beep, turn right. Beep, beep, beep, beep, go forward," you know. "Beep, beep, stop." And that some kind of a mystic thing where I'm walking around in a trance. God is leading me. I'm being led by the Spirit. Not so. In fact, when God is leading your life He does it in such natural ways that generally, you're not even aware that God is leading you because it just seems such a natural thing.

Don't expect God to speak in some earthquake, or in fact, it's awfully hard to hear God many times when our earth is shaking around us. It's awfully hard to hear God in the midst of the tempest and the storms of life. It's hard to hear God when it seems like everything around us is being consumed. Many times we need to get our hearts very quiet before God. We need to get away from the tempest. We need to get away from the shaking and the things around us to get alone to where I can really hear that still, small voice of God within as He guides me, as He assures me of His love, as He assures me of His purpose. And I get the strength and the help from God when He speaks to me. And it's that still, small voice within. So natural that it seems like it comes maybe even from your own heart or your own mind. But in reality, it is God speaking to you. It's always an exciting experience when I come to the realization that that thought didn't come out of my own subconsciousness, that thought came to me from God. God planted that thought in my mind, that still, small voice. It was God speaking to me. And it's beautiful. It's a glorious experience to hear the still, small voice.

The Lord said, repeated the same question, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" And Elijah still didn't understand the question. He answered the Lord the same way.

I've been very jealous for You: for Israel has forsaken the covenant, they've broken down your altars, they've slain your prophets; I, only I am left; and they're looking for me to take my life ([1Ki 19:14](#)).

Commentary on 1 Kings chapters 19 and 20, by Chuck Smith 9.28.22

Now the question was, "What are you doing here?" Not "Why are you here?" So the Lord got then to specifics with this upset prophet because in reality, he was doing nothing. He was hiding. Doing nothing. He had put himself out of service. He was out of commission. There was no one to witness to down there. There was no work for God to be done in that barren wilderness. So he was doing nothing. God doesn't like for us to do nothing. And so the Lord re-commissioned him.

He said, Now look, get out of here, and get on up to Damascus: and when you get there, anoint Hazael to be the king over Syria: And then get down and anoint Jehu to be the king over Samaria: and then anoint Elisha to take your place and all ([1Ki 19:15-16](#)).

God put him back to work. God got him away from this place of hiding in a cave, of doing nothing and commissioned him back into service for the Lord. Even as God wants to get you off your duff and get you back doing something that's worthwhile for Him.

And then the Lord sort of puts a little thing on the end. "Elijah, you were exaggerating."

For I have seven thousand men in Israel, whose knees have not bowed to Baal, whose lips have not kissed his image ([1Ki 19:18](#)).

"I, only I am left." No, no, you're not alone. "I've got seven thousand." God knew them. God had been observing.

So he departed from there, and he found Elisha, and Elisha was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, [actually there were ten before him and he had the twelve beside him]: and as Elijah passed by, he took his mantle and he threw it on him. And Elisha left his oxen there, and came running after Elijah, and he said, Wait a minute, I pray you, let me go back and kiss my father and mother goodbye, and I will follow you. And he said, Go on back to your oxen: what have I done to you? But he returned back and he took a yoke of oxen, and he killed them, and he boiled their flesh, and he gave it to the people, and he ate. And he arose, and went after Elijah, and became the servant of Elijah ([1Ki 19:19-21](#)).

Chapter 20

Now Benhadad who was presently the king of Syria gathered all of his host together: and there were thirty-two kings that went with him, with their horses, and chariots: and they came up and besieged Samaria, and they warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab the king of Israel the city, and he said unto him, Thus saith Benhadad, Thy silver and thy gold is mine; your wives and your children, the best of everything you have, is mine. And so the king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according to your saying, I am thine, and all that I have ([1Ki 20:1-4](#)).

Commentary on 1 Kings chapters 19 and 20, by Chuck Smith 9.28.22

So he asked for complete capitulation. I want all your gold and silver. I want all your wives, all your, you know, all of your possessions. So Ahab was surrendering. He said, "Everything I have is yours."

So Benhadad wasn't satisfied.

He sent back his messengers again, and said, Thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, Although I have sent unto you, saying that you shall deliver to me your silver, gold, wives, and children; Yet I will send my servants unto you tomorrow about this time, and they will search through your house, and the house of your servants; and it shall be, whatever is pleasant in their eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away. And the king of Israel called his elders together, and he said, Mark, I pray you, look how this guy is just really seeking a fight: he doesn't want just our gold and silver and wives; he wants a fight. And so all the elders that were with him said, Don't hearken to him, don't consent. Therefore he sent messengers to Benhadad, he said, Tell my lord the king, All that you did send for your servant at the first will do: but this other request that you have made we're not going to do it. And so the messengers departed, brought him word again. And Benhadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so to me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for the handfuls for all the people that follow me ([1Ki 20:5-10](#)).

And he said, "If everyone took the dust of Samaria, there wouldn't be enough for the number of people I have to even have a fistful of dirt. I got so many people that I'm coming against you with."

And so the king of Israel answered and said, Tell him, Let not him that girds on his harness boast himself as though he was putting it off ([1Ki 20:11](#)).

In other words, don't count your chickens before they hatch.

And so it came to pass, when Benhadad heard this message, as he was drinking, and his kings in the pavilions, he said to his servants, Set yourselves in array. And so they set themselves in battle array against the city. And, behold, there came a prophet to Ahab the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Have you seen this great multitude? behold, I'm going to deliver it into your hand today; and you will know that I am the LORD. So Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Even by the young men the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he said, You. And so Ahab numbered the young men, the princes from the provinces, there were two hundred and thirty two: after them he numbered the people, all of the children of Israel, seven thousand. They went out at noon. And old Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in his pavilions, he with his kings. And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first; Benhadad sent out a patrol, and told him, saying, there are men coming out of Samaria. And so he said, if they've come out for peace, take them alive; if they've come out for war, take them alive. So the young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army followed them. And they

Commentary on 1 Kings chapters 19 and 20, by Chuck Smith 9.28.22

slew every one his man: the Syrians fled; Israel pursued them: Benhadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with his horsemen. And so the king of Israel went out, and he smote the horses, the chariots, he slew the Syrians with a great slaughter. And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go and strengthen yourself, and mark, and see what you are doing: for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against you again ([1Ki 20:12-22](#)).

In other words, now strengthen yourself, fortify things, because at the end of the year the guy is going to be back.

And so the servants of the king of Syria said unto them, The problem is their gods are the gods of the hills; that's why they were able to defeat you; now if you could fight them in the valley, then you could defeat them ([1Ki 20:23](#)).

Because their gods are the gods of the hills and not the gods of the valleys. Now of course, they thought of gods in localized sense. We should never think of God in a localized sense. God is what we say omnipresent. That means he's everywhere at once. Therefore, it is wrong to think of God in a locality. Sometimes we think of God in a localized sense in heaven. And he seems very far off and remote because I don't know where heaven is. It's out there in space somewhere. But I'm pointing out in the space this way but you know if you realize the earth is actually round, and so you'll be pointing down that way through the earth and not in space in the other direction. So I may head out, you know, in space looking for God but I may be going the wrong direction in space, if I think of God in a locality, you know, heaven, wherever that may be.

Or if I think of God here in the church, in a locality. And so often even in our prayers we sort of express the idea of God dwelling here. "Lord, we are so thankful that we can come into Your presence this evening. We can gather here together in Your presence." Hey, you were in His presence when you left home tonight. You were in His presence when you were driving out here. You can't escape the presence of God. And thus it's wrong to think of God in a locality. And yet that was the pagan concept of God. He's the god of the hills. And that was your problem. You let them fight you in the hills and their god is the god of the hills. That's why you were defeated. Next time fight them in the valleys because their god is the god of the hills, not the god of the valleys and you'll be able to defeat them, so they said.

Now gather your army again, all of the kings, all of the chariots. And go up again the second time. And so Benhadad gathered the forces of Syria together and he came up to Aphek to fight against Israel.

And the children of Israel were numbered, all that were present, went out against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids ([1Ki 20:27](#));

They were totally, hopelessly outnumbered.

Commentary on 1 Kings chapters 19 and 20, by Chuck Smith 9.28.22

but the Syrians filled the country ([1Ki 20:27](#)).

They were just like two little flocks. And here the whole vast number of Syrians.

And there came a man of God, and spake to the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD is the God of the hills, but not the God of the valleys, therefore I'm going to deliver this great multitude into your hand, and ye shall know that I am the LORD ([1Ki 20:28](#)).

Now the interesting thing to me at this point is that though Ahab had turned against God and was a very wicked king, still God was continuing to speak to him. You know, though you may turn your back on God, and though you may go your own way, God continues to speak to you. God doesn't just forsake you and let you go, though you may have forsaken Him. God is continuing to speak after this guy has turned his back. So long his back has been turned against God and yet God is still speaking to him. As God continues to speak to you because He loves you and He's seeking to draw you unto Himself, and thus God doesn't cease His work speaking to man.

And so the children of Israel came against them and they're in the valleys and wiped out the Syrians really worse this time than before. The Syrians were fleeing. Benhadad was captured and he was brought back.

And he said unto him, The cities, that my father took from your father, I'm going to restore them; and you shall make streets we'll make streets for you in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. And then Ahab said to him, I will send you away with this covenant. So he made a treaty with him, and sent him away. And a certain man, one of the sons of the prophets came and said to his neighbor, Smite me, I pray you. And the man refused to smite him. Then he said, [All right, because you've refused to smite me,] you've not obeyed the voice of the LORD, so as soon as you depart from here, a lion is going to slay you. So as soon as the man departed from the prophet, a lion slew him. So he found another man, he said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote him, in that he was wounded. And so he came and he waited for Ahab to come along, he disguised himself, he put ashes upon his face. And the king passed by, and he cried to Ahab: and he said, Thy servant went out into the midst of battle; and, behold, a man turned aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this man: and if by any means he is missing, then we'll require your life for him. And this man got away from me and now they want to kill me. And Ahab said, You pronounced your own judgment; you said that it was your life for his life and you let him get away. [Man, you've set your own judgment.] And so the guy took off the disguise; and the king of Israel discerned that he was one of the prophets. And he said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Because you have let go out of your hand the man who I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. And the king of Israel went home [and he began to live more carefully from that point on,] but he was heavily displeased when he came to Samaria ([1Ki 20:34-43](#)).