

FINAL STUDY NOTES – 1 Kings Chapters 19-20! 2/23-24/2026

CLASSROOM LOCATION AND ZOOM – SIGN IN INFORMATION:

Phil Twente: <https://www.ptwente.com> - Previous Audio/notes ptwente@gmail.com cell 714 425 9221

NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE ONLINE (ZOOM) STUDY!

MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM PACIFIC STANDARD Time (US and Canada)
THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY WILL BE MEETING ON ZOOM ONLY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!

MEETING ID - 878 5864 4763 Passcode: 087484

Join Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87858644763?pwd=b25tUzhkaTE0UzIrSnpkVmZEWGJVQT09>

Meeting ID: 878 5864 4763 - Passcode: 087484

One tap mobile: +16699006833,,87858644763# US (San Jose) +13462487799,,87858644763# US (Houston)
Dial by your location: +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose); +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston); +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma); +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C); +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago); +1 929 436 2866 US (New York). Meeting ID: 878 5864 4763 Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbUX7eWEpN>

TUESDAY 7 AM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM PACIFIC STANDARD Time (US and Canada).

TUES MORNING MTG PLACE: 1201 KEY WEST, CORONA DEL MAR (shown as 1201 KW, Corona del Mar, CA 92625) on Global Positioning System (GPS) in automobiles. For driving directions, suggest using (waze.com/live map) or MapQuest (mapquest.com), AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!

MEETING ID# - 853 0915 0746 - Passcode: 715340

Join Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85309150746?pwd=Tk5oVjN0TzdpWjE3UC9Oam05a21uQT09>

Meeting ID: 853 0915 0746 - Passcode: 715340

One tap mobile; +16699006833,,85309150746# US (San Jose) +12532158782,,85309150746# US
Dial by your location: +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose); +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma); +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston); +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C); +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago); +1 929 436 2866 US (New York). Meeting ID: 853 0915 0746 Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kkW7uQ2Q6>
HAVING TROUBLE LOGGING INTO Zoom? <https://www.techpages.com/troubleshooting-zoom-login-errors>

OPENING PRAYER

Review: The LORD Sends Rain - (1Ki 18:43-46) and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again." Then *it came to pass the seventh time*, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, 'Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.' " Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and **there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. Then **the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah**; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.**

1 KINGS – Chapter 19 – Elijah Escapes From Jezebel – (vs. 1-10); God's Revelation to Elijah – (vs. 11-18); Elisha Follows Elijah – (vs. 19-21); Chapter 20 – Ahab Defeats the Syrians – (vs. 1-22); The Syrians Again Defeated – (vs. 23-30); Ahab's Treaty With Ben-Hadad – (vs. 31-34); Ahab Condemned – (vs. 35-43)!

Elijah Flees Jezebel - 1Ki 19:1 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah (not the LORD) had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword.

- **Now Jezebel was really the wicked influence in the kingdom.** She was the daughter of a pagan king, having grown up with the worship of Baal, and Ashtoreth. She was the one who brought the worship of the pagan gods into the worship of the Israeli people. It was through her influence that the prophets of God were slain. So the ungodly influence of Jezebel. Now, her husband tells her that Elijah had killed the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.

1Ki 19:2-3 *Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." [3] And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.*

- **"I am going to get you man! Tomorrow at this time, you are dead."** I mean it was just a real threat from this woman Jezebel, against this prophet Elijah.
- **Here was Elijah with a contest, with these prophets of Baal,** standing up against them. He was brave, --challenging them, you know the whole scene. Now here is Jezebel saying, "Tomorrow at this time man, I'm going to have your head!" Elijah gets frightened. He starts to run. And he ran south, through the land of Israel, through the land of Judah, all the way to Beersheba.

1Ki 19:4 *But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"*

- **"God, I don't want to live anymore."** It is interesting how that fear, often transmits into despair and despondency. Elijah gave into fear. The threat of Jezebel, and as a result, a lack of faith. Fear and faith are mutually exclusive. When you have real faith in God, you are not going to fear. Fear is a sign of a lack of faith in God. Trusting in myself. So, he desires to die. He is discouraged. He probably had felt that the victory of God on Mount Carmel, would not only convince Ahab, but would also convince his wife Jezebel. He figured when Ahab told Jezebel how the fire came down, consumed the sacrifice, the altar, licked up the water, that surely Jezebel would also become a believer in Jehovah, and be converted. But such was not the case. Elijah was discouraged that the revival did not take place.
- **There was an emotional experience among the people, but not really a heart changing** experience. So here he is requesting to die.

1Ki 19:5-6 *Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat." [6] Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again.*

- **We remember how that Jesus called His disciples to come and eat at the Sea of Galilee,** and when they came to the shore, there were fish on a bed of coals. Here an angel of the LORD is inviting Elijah to his table that he had prepared, *a cake baked on coals.* God has interesting ways of provision.
- **One of our problems is as we look at a situation, and as we try to analyze,** and figure out the answers to the problems, as we have thought, "Well if God will just do this, and this, then my problems can be solved." We then are prone to pray that God will follow our instructions, the way we have figured and worked out the solution. Often God has a much simpler answer!
- **With Elijah, He provided for him in different ways,** with the ravens at the brook Cherith. In Zarephath, with the barrel of flour, and the cruse of oil that did not waste away. Now an angel of the LORD, is baking cakes, giving water. He ate, and then he lay down again.

1Ki 19:7 *And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you."*

- **He was probably pretty tired, it is a little over a hundred miles** from Jezreel to Beersheba. Then he kept going, another day's journey. He was really moving! He is really tired. He ate, and went right back to sleep. So the angel came the second time.

1Ki 19:8 *So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God.*

- **Potent, powerful stuff!** This angel's food. It was able to sustain him for *forty days, and forty nights.* Down to Mount Horeb, the mount of God. The place where God gave Moses, the law.

The Lord Speaks to Elijah

1Ki 19:9 *And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"*

- **Here is a prophet of God, on the run.** Fearing Jezebel, his fear takes him clear on down to the borders of Egypt, almost, to the Sinai peninsula, to Mount Horeb, hiding in a cave. There in the cave, God said, *“What are you doing here?”*
- **The Lord does not ask Elijah why he is in the cave,** though that is the question that Elijah answers. He asks him, *“What are you doing here?”* What was Elijah doing there? God did not invest three years of the miraculous into his life for him to quit and do nothing because things have not turned out the way that he wanted. There is a lot of work that God wants to do through Elijah yet. The implication of God's question is that Elijah had deserted his post. God is going to rebuke him for that.

1Ki 19:10 So he (Elijah) said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”

- **Elijah's response, basically a rebuke to God, is that he had been zealous for the LORD,** but the children of Israel have forsaken all of that. His complaint is that he has been doing all of this work, being faithful to God, and it appears that God has been silent, indifferent, and the unrighteous are still prosecuting the righteous. LORD, I have done everything with zeal that You have called me to do.
- **Now, I alone am left.** Elijah's response revealed that he felt he was standing completely alone and defenseless against the ungodly forces that were threatening to overpower him. Elijah is very discouraged. Even the greatest of servants will find themselves in this place at one time or another, facing this kind of discouragement in our service to the Lord. Zealous Elijah types are probably more vulnerable to this than any other in the body of Christ.
- **As we look at this chapter in Elijah's life, we wonder what in the world could cause such a bold, powerful, fearless prophet of God, not only to quit his ministry, but would wish to die.** Two possible causes come to mind, which may be helpful for us to understand.
- **First, Elijah is filled with a sense that what he is doing does not seem to be making any difference at all.** This is one of the most powerful, weapons that the devil uses to discourage God's servants to try and get them to quit. Elijah's been in the ministry for four years. He has nothing to show for it. Wickedness just continues on as it always has and in fact it is growing. He is believing that it would not make any difference, at all if he quit or if he died.
- **How often do I get frustrated with the wickedness and lawlessness that is going on all around me and that what I am doing has really no effect at all?**
- **The second cause of his discouragement is unmet expectations.** Things have not turned out the way that he thought that they would. God has not done things the way that he thought God should do them. That is a very powerful discouragement, not only in our ministries, but in our Christian life.
- **Regarding my expectations for my ministry, are they of the LORD? Or are they just mine, not His at all?**
- **Notice that an Elijah never complains about some physical difficulty or some loss of comfort.** They never complain about ravens, drought or drying streams, or being fed by a widow woman. That never discourages an Elijah. But an Elijah has a weakness.
- **Elijah is discouraged because Mount Carmel did not translate into what he thought it should.** It did not have the spiritual impact that he felt it should have in the nation at that time. It did not bring the revival that he thought it would bring, and here he is! He has given it his best shot, and the nation is still in apostasy. Evil still seems to be winning! Ahab and Jezebel are still ruling and God did not destroy Ahab when he had the perfect chance to do that.
- **Worst of all, instead of Mount Carmel being a place where everything got turned around and momentum in Israel turned toward righteousness, God allowed Jezebel to threaten Elijah with his life.** And the biggest problem that Elijah has at this point in time in his life and in his ministry is not what they have in Jezebel. The crisis he is having with his faith is he has got a big problem with God! Elijah is not doubting the power of God. What he is doubting is the wisdom and the ways of God. There are some people who have a crisis of faith, and their crisis of faith occurs because they lack faith.
- **Elijah has a crisis of faith precisely because he knows God.** His whole life has been one miracle after another. **He knows what God could do in the nation in an instant** without even breaking a sweat, and yet He is not. Elijah's problem is not a crisis of faith in the sense that he doubts the LORD's ability. He knows that God could do it instantly, and yet He has not done it! It is inexplicable to him as to why God would not do it.

1Ki 19:11-12 Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces

before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; [12] and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.

- Notice that God does three things to lift Elijah out of his discouragement. Here is the first!
- **A still small voice.** The idea is that God was in the still small voice. The first thing that God does with Elijah when he is in this place is to reveal a little bit more about God's ways and Himself. As Elijah stands on that mountain, a great wind comes by. God was not in the wind. Then an earthquake, God was not in the earthquake. Then fire! God was not in the fire. Finally, this still small voice, and **God was in the still small voice!**
- **The LORD was speaking to Elijah, and I think to all Elijah's, that not all of life in ministry is going to be Mount Carmel, mountaintop experiences! Not all is going to be obvious power shows and demonstrations.** God is speaking to Elijah and communicating to him that He is not any less God and not working any less powerfully when things are quiet and still! He is still in control when things are quiet and still. He is teaching Elijah not to judge the importance of his service to the LORD by whether it is wind, fire, or earthquake, but that still small voice in ministries and quiet seasons in life are important works of God's Spirit, too.
- **That is not an easy thing for an Elijah to learn** because by the personality in Elijah, it always has to be earthquake. It always has to be fire. It always has to be wind or God's cause is lost. But God reveals to him that that is not true.

1Ki 19:13 So it was, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. Suddenly a voice came to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

- **Again, Elijah evidently did not listen to the question.** He answered in the same way, telling God why he was there.

1Ki 19:14 And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

- Then the LORD wonderfully does the second thing in Elijah's life, simply telling him the next thing to do.

1Ki 19:15 Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus (100 plus miles); and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria.

- **The LORD is saying to Elijah is that he is really doing nothing!** You have a job to do! Now get back to work, which is often the greatest therapy, for a person who is discouraged, feeling defeat. Elijah wants to quit. He wants the LORD to kill him. God says, "Get back to work Elijah. There is a job to be done. Now get on up to Damascus." Note that Elijah had run in the opposite direction from the work that He had for him. Often when you get scared and run, it is in the opposite direction from which God wants you to go. So he had to retrace his steps, going all the way back north to Jezreel and to Damascus, to anoint Hazael as king over Syria.
- **How often does the LORD have to ask me the question, "What are you doing here, Phil?" Do I ever run in the opposite direction from His will? From the work that He has for me to do? How faithful am I to my call?**

1Ki 19:16-17 Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. [17] It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill.

- **The LORD is simply telling Elijah what he is supposed to do next.** He is not being given an option to quit. You go anoint Hazael, anoint Jehu, and anoint Elisha. God is communicating to Elijah not to be so overwhelmed at the size and the power of evil in this world or even among my people. You simply take your place in this big picture of Mine that I am doing worldwide! How frequently am I feeling that being overwhelmed by the evil of the world?
- **You leave the big picture to Me!** Elijah's lament here is that what difference will my life and my ministry make? It does not seem to be making any difference at all! God says that is not your problem. That is My problem. Your problem is to be faithful to what I have called you to do.
- **Elijahs need to hear that because they do tend to take the weight of the whole nation; of the whole world upon themselves.** The LORD reminds Elijah that is not his job. Elijah was just simply to

do what God told him to do next, leaving the big picture to Him and just do the next thing that He tells us to do! That keeps an Elijah reeled in in a way that is healthy for a zealot.

1Ki 19:18 Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him."

- **Here is the third thing that God speaks to Elijah.** He said, *Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.* The LORD informs Elijah that God's plan does not depend on him. Elijahs think everything depends upon them in the whole wide world, exaggerating their self-importance and how much they are needed. Sooner or later, every Elijah will run out of his own or her own strength, energy and resources, and then in exhaustion reveal the thing that it all depends on me. It is all going to collapse without me.
- **The LORD reveals, I have 7,000 times the resources you think I have, Elijah.** How? God's plan and God's work in this world is never dependent upon anyone as weak and tenuous as you and me. It does not depend upon us. It depends upon His grace. It is humbling to hear that and to have God speak that to us. It is freeing in our lives and it brings perspective.
- **How often do I over-exaggerate my self-importance in thinking how much that I am needed in furthering the gospel and doing what needs to be done? If I fail, then the whole cause is lost and it will not get done?**
- **Elijah thought his life, his ministry was over.** He could not know what God had planned for him on the other side of this crisis. A fiery chariot up into heaven; anointing Elisha to become the next prophet; The Mount of Transfiguration with Moses and Jesus! Being one of the two witnesses in Revelation. All of that is on the other side of this crisis of faith, and he has no idea what God has planned. It is good for us to remember these lessons related to Elijah's life!
- **God is working in the quiet times, too. Just do the next thing He tells you to do!** Remember, it does not depend completely upon you. Just stay faithful to God and then watch what it is that he ends up doing as we are faithful to heed him in those areas!

The Call of Elisha

1Ki 19:19 So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his mantle on him.

- **This is our introduction, we are going to find out a lot about Elisha,** as we move into II Kings. He is an exciting fellow, very likeable! He was a guy that really wanted all that God had. When Elijah said, "What do you want?" Elisha said, "Give me a double portion of the spirit that is on you." I mean he is a guy that goes for it. I like people that go for it! You know, all that God has! I want everything that God has for me! It will be at least 10 years before he's anointed to be the prophet. It is the only time in the Old Testament where a prophet is anointed.
- **You would think that the LORD would have told Elijah** to go to Jerusalem or to one of the schools of the prophets to find his successor. But the LORD did not do that. He said, I am going to give you a name (Elisha), and when you find him, you are going to discover that his preparation for ministry has occurred behind a plow and yoke of oxen.
- **God knows where every one of His servants are; His plan for every servant; how to prepare us.** How unique His preparations can be. God usually calls people who were busy. Very industrious and hardworking. I think about Moses, for forty years on the back side of the desert, herding someone else's sheep! Yet, there could not have been a more perfect preparation of his life for what God was going to do in making him a shepherd of Israel, bringing them out of Egypt. Gideon was called while he was threshing wheat. Peter, James, and John were called as they were busy in their fishing business. Nehemiah was called when he was a cup bearer to the king. There is no place in Christian service related to the kingdom of God for a lazy, good for nothing, or slothful person. There is no place at all.
- **It was said of Jesus that He has done all things well.** He started in a carpenter's shop, 30 years before he ever started His public ministry. Then being faithful in that, He moved on to the things to which He had been called.
- **When Elijah throws his mantle onto Elisha,** it symbolized that he was passing his power and the authority of his office to that next individual. Elisha understands that is exactly the meaning of what has just happened here, and it is obvious because of his reaction. Notice his response.

1Ki 19:20 *And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, "Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you." And he (Elijah) said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?"*

- **Here is a guy who was ready to make an immediate commitment.** "All I want to do is go home and kiss my parents, and I am with you! I will follow you!" Elijah just wants to be respectful to his parents in doing so.
- **Go back again, for what have I done to you? It is an unusual reply.** *What have I done to you?* The idea is you go do what you please. What have I done to stop you? You go do what you are going to do. I am just bringing the message of God's calling and what you do with it is none of my business. That is between you and Him. I am not a mediator between you and God. Whether you obey God and be faithful to God, and his call on your life, that is your own business.
- **Wow. I like Elijah and I like Elisha. They are two entirely different people.** Elisha, is a son of consolation. He is a comforter. He is a hugger. He would take the babies and kiss them. But they are two entirely different people. Here is Elijah. He looks at Elisha. He is not going to let Elisha build one tiny ounce of dependence on him. Do not be thinking that you are going to feed off of me for motivation and serving God and strength. You get this going between you and God because I am not in your life to do that.
- **Then you have other guys that encourage other people into ministry.** Elisha needs to be an Elisha, but Elijahs need to be Elijahs, and you need both of them in the body of Christ! God has called you a certain way. He has given you a certain personality. He has refined that personality. He has called you to do something that He has not called the Elisha to do, and you need to be confident in how God has made you. Go back again, for *what have I done to you?*

1Ki 19:21 *So Elisha turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.*

- **Elisha is burning bridges.** This is what my life was once about, plowing or these oxen and this yoke and here with the plow and all. I am done with this. God has called me to do something else! I am burning the bridges to all of this.

Ahab's Wars with Syria

1Ki 20:1 *Now Ben-Hadad the king of Syria gathered all his forces together; thirty-two kings were with him, with horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged Samaria, and made war against it.*

- **Now these thirty-two were vassal kings, not kings of major nations.** In those days, each city had its king. So Ben-Hadad, king over Syria had thirty-two of these vassal kings, that joined with him. They probably were paying tribute to him. When he went out to war, they would come and support with their troops.

1Ki 20:2-3 *Then he sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, and said to him, "Thus says Ben-Hadad: [3] 'Your silver and your gold are mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine.' "*

- **The good looking ones are mine!**

1Ki 20:4 *And the king of Israel answered and said, "My lord, O king, just as you say, I and all that I have are yours."*

- **He realized that he was outnumbered by the Syrians,** and he was willing to give this tribute to the king of Syria. The gold, the silver, his wives and children.

1Ki 20:5-6 *Then the messengers came back and said, "Thus speaks Ben-Hadad, saying, 'Indeed I have sent to you, saying, "You shall deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children"; [6] but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search your house and the houses of your servants. And it shall be, that whatever is pleasant in your eyes, they will put it in their hands and take it.' "*

- **Now, he asked for the silver and gold, wives and children, and Ahab is willing to do this.** Can you imagine that? But Ben-Hadad only comes back with a stronger demand. "No, don't send them to me, I'll send my servants, and they'll pick up anything else that they see, that they want, that they desire."

1Ki 20:7-10 *So the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Notice, please, and see how this man seeks trouble, for he sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold; and I did not deny him." [8] And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent." [9] Therefore he said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, "Tell my lord the king, 'All that you sent for to your servant the first time I will do, but this thing I cannot do.' " And the messengers departed and*

brought back word to him. [10] Then Ben-Hadad sent to him and said, "The gods do so to me, and more also, if enough dust is left of Samaria for a handful for each of the people who follow me."

- This is a typical boast of Oriental kings. They would try to scare their enemies with threats. "I have so many men, you know that if they each took a handful of dust out of Samaria, there would not be enough dust for them.
- Ben-Hadad just is looking for a fight. He made a rather unreasonable demand, and Ahab was willing to go along with it, and so he just comes back with a greater demand, because he really wants to fight.

1Ki 20:11 So the king of Israel answered and said, "Tell him, 'Let not the one who puts on his armor boast like the one who takes it off.' "

- As you are putting on your sword, and your shield, you may boast of what you are going to do, but it is better to wait until the battle is over, and do your boasting when you see what the outcome is.

1Ki 20:12 And it happened when Ben-Hadad heard this message, as he and the kings were drinking at the command post, that he said to his servants, "Get ready." And they got ready to attack the city.

- "All right!" you know, "That's it!"

Ahab Defeats Ben-Hadad

1Ki 20:13 Suddenly a prophet (unnamed, possibly Micaiah) approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I am the LORD!'"

- God is not going to punish the entire nation now because of this one man. Not only that, but God is also extending grace to Ahab. You are going to know that I am the LORD, Ahab. This multitude, I am going to deliver it into your hand. Now the problem with an Ahab, the problem with people that are stubborn, that live in rebellion, is that they mistake God's grace for God's approval. Paul tells us about that. They mistake the long-suffering and the goodness of God for His approval. Now God had sent fire, that Ahab might know that He was the LORD! Now God is promising another sign. "I am going to deliver this great multitude into your hands. And you shall know that I am the LORD!"

1Ki 20:14 So Ahab said, "By whom?" And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'By the young leaders of the provinces.' " Then he said, "Who will set the battle in order?" And he answered, "You."

- This is another classic example of the grace of God. That God would still deal with Ahab, who was totally wicked. There is not one redeeming feature in this man! He is corrupt. He has led the nation down the tubes in corruption, and still, God in His grace, deals with him. I marvel at the patience and longsuffering of God! Here is a man who turned his back on God, over and over again. Here is a man that had set himself against God, and yet God is so patient in dealing with him, and gives him chance, after chance. Oh, the grace, the longsuffering, the mercy, the compassion of God!

1Ki 20:15 Then he mustered the young leaders of the provinces, and there were two hundred and thirty-two; and after them he mustered all the people, all the children of Israel—seven thousand.

- Not very many against the vast army of Syria. It is almost like Gideon against the Midianites. Just a few men against this vast host of Syrians.

1Ki 20:16 So they went out at noon. Meanwhile Ben-Hadad and the thirty-two kings helping him were getting drunk at the command post.

- They were getting drunk at the command post. That is how confident they were!

1Ki 20:17 The young leaders of the provinces went out first. And Ben-Hadad sent out a patrol, and they told him, saying, "Men are coming out of Samaria!"

- So, word comes back to Ben-Hadad, who was pretty drunk at this time, you know, "Some men have come out from the city."

1Ki 20:18 So he said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; and if they have come out for war, take them alive."

- Just drunken boasting.

1Ki 20:19-20 Then these young leaders of the provinces went out of the city with the army which followed them. [20] And each one killed his man; so the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them; and Ben-Hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the cavalry.

- This is a supernatural fear that spreads. It is irrational, the number of men they have and all, they should not be able to kill so many, but God is on the side of the children of Israel.

1Ki 20:21-22 Then the king of Israel went out and attacked the horses and chariots, and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter. [22] And the prophet came to the king of Israel and said to him, "Go,

strengthen yourself; take note, and see what you should do, for in the spring of the year the king of Syria will come up against you."

- This is tremendous intelligence that the LORD gives him here and his need to further strengthen himself and his army for what it is that Ben-Hadad is going to put together against them the following year. Now, while Ahab is getting this kind of counsel from God, Ben-Hadad is inferior counsel.

1Ki 20:23-25 Then the servants of the king of Syria said to him, "Their gods are gods of the hills. Therefore they were stronger than we; but if we fight against them in the plain, surely we will be stronger than they. [24] So do this thing: Dismiss the kings (politicians out, military in), each from his position, and put captains in their places; [25] and you shall muster an army like the army that you have lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot. Then we will fight against them in the plain; surely we will be stronger than they." And he listened to their voice and did so.

- Now they had their concepts of gods, which they thought they could localize god. They thought the God of Israel was limited to the hills. If they could fight Israel on the plains, they could easily win.
- At times, we think somewhat like that. When we gather in church, and pray, we so often say, "Oh God, it is so good to gather in Your presence." As though God is a God of locality and He dwells in this building, but He does not dwell in your car, or in your home. You do not escape His presence.
- David said (Psa 139:7-10) *Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend into heaven, You are there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there. If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me.* We are surrounded. He is everywhere!

Ahab Defeats Ben-Hadad Again

1Ki 20:26-27 So it was, in the spring of the year, that Ben-Hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. [27] And the children of Israel were mustered and given provisions, and they went against them. Now the children of Israel encamped before them like two little flocks of goats, while the Syrians filled the countryside.

- The battle setup appears to be a pitiful thing. The Syrians come with these massive troops, and chariots, and everything else, just filling the country. And here are these two little units of Israel. They look like just a little flock of goats here on the hillside, against this huge host of the Syrians.

1Ki 20:28 Then a man of God (unnamed) came and spoke to the king of Israel, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because the Syrians have said, "The LORD is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys," therefore I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I am the LORD.'"

- Again! God is proving Himself to the king. He is the God not only of the hills, but of the valleys. He is not only the God of the mountaintop experiences, but He also has the valleys. And He is with us in the valley, as well as on the mountaintop. You know, back in the valley. "What a shame, I wish I could feel His presence here." But, no. He is the God of the valleys. Many times God becomes more real to me in the valley, than on the mountaintops.
- God says, look, this is happening, you know, because you need to know that I am the LORD. The Syrians obviously need to know that I am not just the God of the hills, I am the God of the valleys too. God is saying I would really like for My people to realize that I am the God of the mountaintop experiences in their lives and I am the God of the valleys that come in their lives also. What plagues My people is when everything is going wonderful, they say, LORD, quite easily. Things are working in their lives.
- But when the experience in the valleys come, the difficult days, when things are hard, they need to know that I am the LORD of the valleys also, not just the LORD of the mountains. I am the LORD of the high experiences in their lives, and I am the LORD of the low experiences in their lives also. I personally, am still learning that.
- **Does He ever have to correct my erroneous thinking that God is limited, "so you shall know that I am the LORD? Hopefully not! May I understand that You are not ever limited in any way!**

1Ki 20:29 And they encamped opposite each other for seven days. So it was that on the seventh day the battle was joined; and the children of Israel killed one hundred thousand foot soldiers of the Syrians in one day.

- What an incredible, supernatural victory from the LORD! Just think of killing 100,000 soldiers in one day in hand to hand combat! God says, look, this is happening, you know, because you need to

know that I am the LORD! The Syrians obviously need to know that I'm not just the God of the hills, I'm the God of the valleys too!

- **We too, need to know that He is the LORD of the high experiences** in their lives, and that He is the LORD of the low experiences in their lives as well!

1Ki 20:30 *But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; then a wall fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men who were left. And Ben-Hadad fled and went into the city, into an inner chamber.*

- They think they are safely hiding behind and then the wall collapses on them, which must have been a miracle of God. 27,000 are killed by the falling wall!

1Ki 20:31 *Then his servants said to him, "Look now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings. Please, let us put sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads, and go out to the king of Israel; perhaps he will spare your life."*

- Now that was something unusual. Usually kings were not very merciful. The Assyrians were noted for their cruelty, for the way that they would brutalize the captives, mutilating their bodies, and torturing them. But we have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful. Yes they were, because they knew God, and had received mercy from God. Perhaps he will spare your life. Let us submit to him.

1Ki 20:32-34 *So they wore sackcloth around their waists and put ropes around their heads, and came to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-Hadad says, 'Please let me live.'" And he (Ahab) said, "Is he still alive? He is my brother (???)." [33] Now the men were watching closely (How that he was going to respond.) to see whether any sign of mercy would come from him; and they quickly grasped at this word and said, "Your brother Ben-Hadad." So he said, "Go, bring him." Then Ben-Hadad came out to him; and he had him come up into the chariot. [34] So Ben-Hadad said to him, "The cities which my father took from your father I will restore; and you may set up marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria." Then Ahab said, "I will send you away with this treaty." So he made a treaty with him and sent him away.*

- So here he had the enemy, at his mercy, and he showed mercy. The Syrian kings were on the rise. Also Assyria was on the move of becoming a strong power. Ahab may have politically desired to make treaties with the nations surrounding Israel, the more the better. The LORD wanted Ben-Hadad killed and for Israel to trust in Him and not in men.
- So he made a treaty with him and sent him away. Notice that sadly Ahab completely ignores the glory of the LORD, who had given him the victory!

A Prophet Condemns Ben-Hadad's Release

1Ki 20:35-36 *Now a certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his neighbor by the word of the LORD, "Strike me, please." And the man refused to strike him. [36] Then he said to him, "Because you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, surely, as soon as you depart from me, a lion shall kill you." And as soon as he left him, a lion found him and killed him.*

- Ahab was the instrument to bring God's judgement against Ben-Hadad. God had appointed that Ahab should bring His judgement, for God had appointed Ben-Hadad to utter destruction. Ahab failed. He chose to release him. So this prophet of God, (Josephus tells us that it was Micaiah), who came to him with his bandaged face. He had been wounded. He had told this guy, "Hit me! In the name of the LORD, hit me!" The guy said, "Oh no! "Because you have not obeyed the LORD, as soon as you leave me, a lion's going to devour you."

1Ki 20:37-38 *And he found another man, and said, "Strike me, please." So the man struck him, inflicting a wound. [38] Then the prophet departed and waited for the king by the road, and disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes.*

- The next guy hit him and wounded him. So he put this bandage on, and he came to the king in this disguise. He made up this story. "A prisoner was given to me, and I was to watch him. The guy says, 'Watch him and if the guy escapes, it will be your life for his. While I was busy doing other things, the guy escaped.'" King Ahab king said, "Hey you have named your own sentence man, you have judged yourself; you let him escape. You have named your own penalty."

1Ki 20:39-40 *Now as the king passed by, he cried out to the king and said, "Your servant went out into the midst of the battle; and there, a man came over and brought a man to me, and said, 'Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, your life shall be for his life, or else you shall pay a talent of silver.' [40] While your servant was busy here and there, he was gone." Then the king of Israel said to him, "So shall your judgment be; you yourself have decided it."*

- **This whole thing is a setup to get Ahab to pronounce guilt upon himself**, because that is precisely what he had done with Ben-Hadad. So Ahab looks at this guy and lays the law down unto him for a lesser thing than what he had done in releasing Ben-Hadad.

1Ki 20:41 And he hastened to take the bandage away from his eyes; and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets.

- **The king said, “Oh no! Not the prophet!”** The prophet said, “Thus says the LORD, because you let him go. It is going to be your life for his. You let go of the man that God had appointed for utter destruction. Therefore it is going to be your life for his.” And it was, as we will see.

1Ki 20:42-43 Then he (Josephus says it is Micaiah) said to him, “Thus says the LORD: ‘Because you have let slip out of your hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life (1Ki 22:34-35), and your people for his people (2Ki 10:32-33)’ [43] So the king of Israel went to his house sullen and displeased, and came to Samaria.

- **Sullen and displeased**. Are we ever like that when the LORD chastens us?
- **It should have been a day of great victory if Ahab had done everything that God had called him to**, but now instead of celebrating the great victory, because he did not do what God had called him to, Ahab goes home, unrepentant, and he sulks. This is something that characterized Ahab's life.
- **So this decision again that Ahab makes here to spare Ben-Hadad**, who will live to fight another day. The prophet knew what he was talking about; whereas Ahab did not know what he was doing in not judging Ben-Hadad as God intended it.
- **Notice there is no joy in victory if you are outside of being obedient to God!** There are always consequences that follow disobedience. LORD, help me to be obedient to You and Your Word!

SUMMARY -

- **How often does the LORD have to ask me the question**, “What are you doing here, Phil?” Do I ever run in the opposite direction from the work that He has for me to do? How faithful am I?
- **How often do I get frustrated with the wickedness and lawlessness that is going on all around me** and that what I am doing has really no effect at all?
- **Regarding my expectations for my ministry, are they of the LORD?** Or are they just mine, not His at all?
- **How often do I over-exaggerate my self-importance in thinking how much that I am needed** in furthering the gospel and doing what needs to be done? If I fail, then the whole cause is lost and it will not get done?
- *am the LORD?* Hopefully not! May I understand that You Lord, are not ever limited in any way!

(Isa 42:8) I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to carved images. (Pray for the 2/24/26 State of the Union message by President Trump that **all glory be to God!**)

TO GOD BE THE GLORY – Graham Choir – (2:26/2:29)

I To God be the glory, great things He has done; So loved He the world that He gave us His Son, Who yielded His life an atonement for sin, And opened the life gate that all may go in.

Refrain: Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the earth hear His voice! Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, Let the people rejoice! O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son, And give Him the glory, great things He has done.

2 Great things He has taught us, great things He has done, And great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son; But purer, and higher, and greater will be Our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see. (Refrain)

CLOSING PRAYER

NEXT WEEK: Study *I Kings, Chapters 21-22*