

# (Through the Bible) 1 Kings 17-22

by Chuck Smith

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*Elijah's story teaches us the importance of prioritizing our relationship with God and trusting in His promises, even in the midst of challenges and difficulties.*

**Duration:** 1:34:32

**Topics:** "Through The Bible"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Ben Haddad and Ahab from the Bible. Ben Haddad gathers his army to battle against the city, but a prophet comes to Ahab and tells him that God will deliver the multitude into his hands. Ahab asks who will order the battle, and the prophet says it will be done by the young men, the princes of the provinces. The preacher then shifts to the story of a widow who encounters the prophet Elijah. She tells him that she only has enough flour and oil to make a few pieces of bread for herself and her son before they die. However, Elijah tells her to make him some bread first, and miraculously, her flour and oil do not run out. Later, her son becomes very sick and stops breathing. The widow blames herself and questions Elijah, but he prays to God and the boy is revived. The sermon emphasizes the importance of having a right relationship with God and trusting in Him to provide for our needs.

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## Transcript

Let's turn to the First Kings, chapter 17. The 17th chapter of First Kings introduces us now to a very interesting character, Elijah the Tishbite, whatever Tishbite means. Now Elijah came from the area of Gilead, which is what you would call today Transjordan, if you were in Israel.

It was across Jordan in the area of Gad. And so he came from the area of Gilead. It is thought that it is possible that Tishbite means that he was not really an Israelite, that he was some other nationality.

But that is only a conjecture, we don't know for sure. But he certainly had a very interesting career. And he comes to the apostate northern tribe at really sort of its lowest point when Ahab is the king with his wicked wife Jezebel.

And they have just about eliminated the worship of Jehovah. They have introduced bell worship to Israel. They have broken down the altars of God.

They have slain the prophets of God. And they have just about eliminated the worship of God from the northern kingdom of Israel. And so at this dark period of history, Elijah comes on the scene with the message of God and the warning of God for the people.

And so he is a very interesting character indeed. It is prophesied in Malachi that before Jesus comes again, that Elijah will come and will be turning the hearts of the children to their fathers and God is going to send Elijah back to the nation Israel to really bring a great revival to Israel before the second coming of Jesus Christ. Now, when Zechariah the priest, recorded in Luke chapter 1, was in the temple fulfilling his course of ministry, the angel Gabriel stood beside the altar and informed Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth in her old age was to bear a son.

And he said, and he shall go forth in the spirit and in the power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the children unto their fathers. The key there I think is the spirit and the power of Elijah. We then follow when in the first chapter of John, when John the Baptist was fulfilling his ministry, they came to John and they said unto him, Who gave you the authority to do these things? Are you Elijah? And he said, No.

Are you that other prophet? No. Then who are you? He said, I'm the voice of one crying in the wilderness saying, Make straight the path of the Lord. Now, John denied that he was Elijah.

However, after the death of John the Baptist, Jesus was talking about John and he said, Of all men born of women, there is not risen a greater prophet than John the Baptist. Yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. The disciples then said to the Lord, How is it then? He's giving John the Baptist this credit for being one of the greatest prophets.

He said, How is it then that the Bible says Elijah must first come? And Jesus said, Elijah shall first come. In other words, the prophecy of Malachi will be fulfilled. Before Jesus comes again, Elijah will first come.

But, he said, if you are able to receive it, this is Elijah. Referring to John the Baptist. Now, we realize that there are two aspects of the coming of Jesus Christ.

His first coming was to give himself as God's Lamb a sacrifice for our sins. His second coming is to reign and to establish God's kingdom upon the earth. But, there are two aspects to the coming of Christ.

And thus, there are two aspects to the prophecy of Elijah being the forerunner. And thus, John the Baptist in the spirit and in the power of Elijah was the forerunner at the first coming. But, Elijah will return to be the forerunner before Jesus comes again.

John the Baptist was in the spirit and in the power of Elijah. Now, Elijah did appear with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. When Jesus went up into the high mountain with his disciples Peter, James, and John and he was transfigured before them.

Elijah appeared there on the Mount of Transfiguration with the Lord. No doubt in Revelation chapter 11 verse 2 where it speaks of the Lord sending the two witnesses, his two witnesses unto the nation Israel that one of the two witnesses will indeed be Elijah and the fulfillment of the prophecy of Malachi. So, Elijah is a very interesting character because he is interwoven.

This is the beginning of his career. But, he showed up on the Mount of Transfiguration and he's going to show up once more before Jesus comes again. Now, because of the prophecy that Elijah will first come that is why the Jews at every Passover when they celebrate Passover they always set the empty chair and

leave the door open.

They're waiting for Elijah to come, the door is open, he's welcome and they've got the chair set for him at the table and it is a sign of their anticipation of the Messiah's return but they know before he returns, their anticipation of the Messiah they're not really looking for him to return but their anticipation of the Messiah and the chair set for Elijah before the return. So, very interesting character and now we get into the study of this fellow Elijah who came into Israel at this dark period of their history when there is such a great spiritual decline and he comes in very dramatically with a dramatic announcement and then he disappears. He came to Ahab, the wicked king and he said, as the Lord God lives before whom I stand there is not going to be dew or rain for these years until I say so and then he took off and he was gone for three and a half years and for three and a half years there was a drought not a drop of rain, no dew from heaven until the land became very dry and parched.

Now he took off first of all over to the brook Cherith which is back towards Gilead from which he had come and the Lord instructed him to go to the brook and drink of its water and the Lord said, I'll feed you there and God commissioned a couple of ravens to bring him food to eat every day actually in the morning and in the evening they brought him bread and they brought him meat and so he was there by the brook Cherith morning and evening the ravens would show up with his food and he was just staying there until the brook dried up because of the lack of rain and so the Lord then commanded him to get to Zarephath over near Sidon so it would be in the area of the Lebanon today Sidon is about 10 miles north from Akko and there is a widow woman there the Lord said and she will take care of

you so he went and he came to Zarephath and when he came to the gate of the city behold he saw this widow woman and she was gathering sticks now in the more primitive cultures the ladies go out and gather sticks for their fires you can go down to Guatemala and see the ladies today out gathering sticks for their fires and over in Israel in the primitive culture and it still does exist in many areas there the ladies out gathering sticks and they of course cook over the open fires and it's quite interesting and so she was gathering these sticks and he said to her would you bring me a drink of water and so while she was going to get him a drink of water he said oh while you're bringing me the water how about bringing me some bread too and so she poured out her heart she said I'm sorry sir I

don't have any bread in fact I'm gathering a couple sticks now to build a fire and I have just a little oil and a little flour left enough to make a couple of pieces of bread for my son and I and we're going to eat those and then we're just going to die I'm just we're depleted we have no flour no oil so Elijah said first make me some bread and then make it for you and your son and according to the Lord and the word of the Lord the flour shall not cease nor the oil until this old drought is over and so the widow lady went in and she made Elijah some bread and she found out that there was still flour left in the barrel still oil and she kept feeding him and during this whole period of the drought the flour did not fail nor the oil it was always enough to make just one more it's really a

miracle indeed and there's no taking away from the miraculous aspect of it how that God supplied miraculously but it is interesting the prophet said make it for me first and then for yourself there is sort of a spiritual kind of a thing here as far as giving to God the first fruits of our lives Jesus said seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these other things will be added unto you now if I twist this priority and I start seeking first other things then my life will be so involved in seeking other things that I don't have time for God but if I seek first my relationship with God then all of my other relationships come into balance they all just work on in you see my life exists on two planes the vertical axis upon which my

life revolves and the horizontal plane

this outer area my relationship with other people now if the vertical axis of my life is correct if my relationship with God is what it should be then the horizontal plane of my life is in balance my relationship with those around me is in balance and I am living a well balanced life if the vertical axis is correct if my relationship with God is all that it should be however if the vertical axis of my life is not correct if my relationship with God isn't all that it should be then the horizontal plane of my life is also going to be out of kilter and I find myself on this crazy topsy-turvy kind of an experience where I'm always trying to balance my life and I'm spending all my time trying to get life into balance and things into proper focus and I just never can seem to quite make it just

about the time I get up here to try and balance this side then I come over board this way you know and I'm constantly working to get my life into balance never seeming to be able to do it my relationships are all messed up now if I spend my time in just trying to balance my life I am only treating the symptoms it's like trying to treat a brain tumor with aspirin you know just to sort of deaden the pain so you don't feel it so bad then you don't feel these headaches quite so severely but you're only treating symptoms you're not getting to the heart of the problem now any doctor who only treats symptoms is a quack stay away from him you want a doctor that's going to find out what the cause is that's creating the symptom why are you getting dizzy? why do you have this severe pressure in the

head? you want something more than aspirin now people are so often treating only the symptoms the relationship and trying to get this relationship correct and oh I've got to work on this and I've got to work on that and oh this is all messed up now you know and we're so busy in the horizontal plane trying to get it in balance when in reality the solution is very simple get the vertical axis correct seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness Elijah said make me first the cake now had she gone in to make first of all the cake for herself and her son that had been it the barrel had been empty of flour the oil had been gone they would have died make me first the cake and then for you and your son put the Lord first get your priorities correct and God will take care of you God will

take care of the other aspects of your life so the most important relationship that I have in all this world is my relationship with God and nothing should get before it and if I'm going to work on any relationship at all I should be working on this relationship with God above every other relationship because if this gets correct then the others are all going to fall into balance if this relationship with God is out of kilter then there is no way I'm going to be able to balance my life it will always be in this crazy topsy-turvy way there's no way you can have a well balanced life until your life is centered in God and that is the vertical axis upon which your life is rotating and until then it's always going to be out of balance out of kilter so Elijah set forth really a principle for

this gal for God to work put God first and God will take care of you He'll take care of the seconds and the thirds and the fours but it's priority and it's simple it's basic and yet it's one of the most important truths that you need to learn in your whole experience of life is that your relationship with God must supersede every other relationship make sure that you have a right relationship with God because that will see you through everything else so the little woman did what Elijah said and God took care verse 16 now it came to pass that the son of this woman became very sick and actually he was so sick he quit breathing and so she said to Elijah what have I to do with thee O thou man of God are you come to call my sin to remembrance and to slay my son now it is interesting that she

was sort of thinking that the death of her son was somehow related to her own sin and Elijah said unto her give me your son and he took him out of her bosom and he carried him up into a loft where he stayed in a loft there next to her house and he laid him on his own bed and he cried unto the Lord and said O Lord my God have you brought this evil upon this woman that I am staying with in slaying her son and he stretched himself out of the child three times and he cried unto the Lord and said O Lord my God I pray thee let this child's soul or consciousness come into him again and the Lord heard the voice of Elijah and the soul of the child came to him again and he revived and Elijah took the child and brought him down to his mother and presented him to her and he said look your son is

living and the woman said to Elijah now by this I know that you are a man of God and the word of the Lord is in your mouth in truth so our introduction to Elijah now it came to pass after many days that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year saying go show yourself to Ahab and I will send rain upon the earth now this is very important to the further part of the story the word of the Lord came to Elijah saying go show yourself to Ahab I'm going to send rain upon the earth so he has the promise of God that rain is going to come now later on we're going to find Elijah up on Mount Carmel praying, bowing himself and praying God send rain and sending his servant out toward the Mediterranean to see if there were any clouds coming and he sends his servant out seven times but his

prayer and sending the servant out looking for a cloud is related to this first verse where the Lord promised I will send rain in other words the prayer was premised upon the fact that he had heard from the Lord and received the promise of God prayers that are based upon God's promises and God's word you can be sure are going to be answered so here's the promise of God he heard the word of the Lord and on the basis of the hearing ear came the prayer we'll get to that a little later I just want you to make note of that at this point and we'll come back to it so Elijah went to show himself to Ahab and in the area of Samaria the northern kingdom there was a horrible famine because they've been now for three years without rain and so Ahab had called Obadiah who was the governor over his house

now a little personal note on Obadiah he was a man who really feared God and during the time that Jezebel was cutting off all of the prophets of God this fellow Obadiah took a hundred prophets and he hid them in two caves fifty in each cave and he brought them food and he fed them and took care of them as they were hiding from Jezebel who had of course ordered all of the prophets of God slain so Ahab said to Obadiah now you go this way through the land and see if you can find any pools of water where there might be some green grass around them so that we can feed our mules and horses and keep them alive that we don't lose all of our animals and you go this way through the land and I'll go this way through the land and we'll meet again and we'll find all of the pools of water that we can

where there might be some green grass to keep at least a few of our animals alive so as Obadiah was going out looking Elijah came to meet him and Obadiah knew Elijah and he fell on his face and he said aren't you my lord Elijah and Elijah said I am go and tell your lord King Ahab that I am here and he said hey what have I done to hurt you man you want me to go tell Ahab you're here and as soon as I do then the spirit of the lord will probably catch you off someplace else and you know how Ahab is after you he's been looking for you all over the place there's no place he hasn't searched for you and I go and say come on over here Elijah is going to meet you and then I bring him over here and the lord has carted you off someplace else he's going to kill me now look I'm a family man and I

don't mean you any harm why would you ask me to do something like that and Elijah said I will surely be here and I will meet him and so he told him again now go and tell your lord behold Elijah is here so

Obadiah went to meet Ahab and he told Ahab Elijah is over here so Ahab came and it is interesting Ahab said unto him are you the one that has troubled Israel you know it is interesting to me that people live such wicked lives and then when the fruit of their wickedness comes they want to then blame God for the calamities in their lives years ago when I was in Tucson we had a lady come to visit our church whose husband was an army captain or an air force captain and so I was making a routine call on her because she had attended the church and as I went over to their house in the evening

that I might meet her husband and all the fellow met me at the door and I introduced myself I said I'm Chuck Smith and your wife was in church last Sunday and I just came over to meet you and say hi and the guy began to curse me and he said get out of here I don't want to see you and he was just very mean he didn't even know me and he said I have just come from the hospital where the doctors have told me that my little girl has polio well I knew that he had a little boy that was crippled from polio he had come with his mother to church and he said this is my second child with polio and any God that would allow my children to have this crippling disease I hate I want nothing to do with anybody that has anything to do with him and he began to curse me again and I said tell me something sir

have you been serving God and that really made him mad and he went on with his oath telling me you know that he hadn't been serving God he said I know what it's all about my dad's a Presbyterian minister I grew up in a Christian home and all but then he was just so so bitter against God and I said well answer me this if you hate God so much and you haven't been serving him why should God be obligated to take care of your children I mean after all what does God owe you well he was silent but I didn't go in but it is interesting how that somehow we want to live our own lives we want to ignore God we don't want any part of God in our lives until calamity comes and then somehow we want to blame God for the calamity why would God do this to me as though God actually owed me something

when I've been totally ignoring him so Ahab is now trying to blame the prophet of God for the calamity that has come to the land the drought now just because Elijah said there's not going to be any rain until I say so he is blaming Elijah for the judgment of God are you the one that troubles Israel and Elijah is not about to take the blame he answered I haven't troubled Israel but you and your father's house have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and you followed Balaam now therefore send and gather me together all Israel to the Mount Carmel and bring in the prophets of Baal all 450 of them and the prophets of the groves the 400 prophets of Ashtoreth that you've been supporting so Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel gathered the prophets together to Mount Carmel and Elijah came

unto the people and he said how long halt ye between two opinions if the Lord is God follow him but if Baal then follow him and the people didn't answer a word then said Elijah unto the people I even I only remain a prophet of the Lord but Baal's prophets are 450 men now give us two bullocks let them take the choice whatever bullock they want and cut it in pieces and lay it on wood and don't put any fire under it and I will dress the other bullock and lay it on wood and put no fire under and let them call on the name of their gods and I will call upon the name of Jehovah and the God that answers by fire let him be God and all the people said good enough fair enough well spoken so here is Elijah making an open challenge to the prophets of Baal and so Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal

choose one of the bullocks for yourself dress it first for you've got a lot of you guys call on the name of your gods but don't put any fire under it they took the bullock that was given to them they dressed it they called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying oh Baal hear us but there was no voice nor any that answered and they leaped upon the altar that was made now it came to pass at noon that Elijah

decided to just mock them and have a little sport and he said you guys ought to be crying louder for now look he's a god thus maybe he's in conversation or maybe he's on vacation or he could be asleep and you need to wake him up so why don't you scream a little louder and so they cried all the louder they cut themselves in great religious zeals with knives with lancets till

the blood was gushing out all over them leaping on the altar crying for Baal to send fire and of course nothing happened now about the time of the evening sacrifice that there was neither a voice to answer nor any that regarded their cries so Elijah said to all the people come on over here now near me and the people came near to him and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down and Elijah took 12 stones according to the number of the tribes of Israel and he came and he built with these stones the altar in the name of the Lord he made a trench about the altar enough to contain about two measures of seed and he put wood in order and he cut up the bullock in pieces and laid them on the wood and he said fill four barrels with water and poured on the burnt sacrifice in the wood he

said do it a second time do it a third time and the water ran all about the altar filled the trench also with water came to pass at the time of the evening offering Elijah the prophet came near and he said Jehovah God of Abraham Isaac and of Israel let it be known this day that you are the God in Israel and that I am your servant that I have done all of these things at thy word hear me oh Lord hear me that this people may know that you are Jehovah God and that you have turned their heart back again and the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up all the water that was in the trench and when all the people saw it they fell on their faces and they said Jehovah he is the God Jehovah he is God and Elijah said unto them take

the prophets of Baal don't let any of them escape and he took them down to the brook Kishon which is in the valley there beneath Mount Carmel flowing out of Megiddo into the Mediterranean and he killed all 850 of them there and so Elijah said to Ahab get up and eat and drink for there is a sound of an abundance of rain so Ahab went to eat and to drink and Elijah went up to the top of Carmel and he cast himself down on the earth and he put his face between his knees and he said to his servant go up and look towards the Mediterranean and he went up and looked he said there is nothing he said go again and he sent him 7 times and it came to pass the 7th time that he said behold there is a rising a little cloud out of the sea about the size of a man's hand and he said go up and say to Ahab

prepare your chariot and get down in order that the rain doesn't stop you and so it came to pass in the meantime that the heaven was black with clouds and the wind and there was a great rain and Ahab rode and went to Jezreel the other end of the valley of Megiddo and the hand of the Lord was on Elijah and he girded up his loins and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel so God answered by fire and now God sent the rain in answer to his prayer but remember the confidence in prayer came from the fact of the listening ear and this is always true real confidence in prayer comes from the fact that I have heard from the Lord the listening ear is an important thing in prayer now so often we're so overwhelmed with our particular problem that we just rush right into God and start blurting out

the whole you know scene rather than coming in and just waiting to maybe listen to God maybe he has something to tell me with many people prayer is only thought of in terms of a monologue they never think of prayer as a dialogue but real prayer should actually be a dialogue I should be listening to God I should be listening to see what God instructs and directs me and therefore that time of quietness before the Lord is very important where I just go in and I just sit down and relax and then when I'm quiet before the Lord that he might have an opportunity to speak to me then I speak to him and then I believe it's always

important for me to wait for him to answer me and so I like to spend quiet time listening talking listening again that I might get directions or instructions or guidance

from the Lord a response to my request and it's always an exciting experience when God responds to my questions or to my request and begins to give me direction and answers because I take time to wait for the response a lot of times I hear people say well God never responded to me well did you give him a chance you see did you really listen did you wait for the response from God 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 a 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 80 miles 85 miles south from this area and he left his servant there probably so bushed he couldn't go on any further but he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and he came and sat down under a juniper tree and he requested that he might die he said it's enough now Lord I've had it take away my life slay me I'm through now this is you know out of a disrupt condition you're all upset and it's interesting how that when we are so upset we often times 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 I really don't mean that Lord slay me I've had it I'm through just kill me Lord 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 you know come on and eat because you're going to go a long way on this

food so he had angels food and it lasted for 40 days good stuff very nutritious he went 40 days on the strength of that meat and he came to Horeb the mountain of God 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 law 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 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 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 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 you're upset and I understand you know you get so down that you just can't see any glimmer of hope any light Lord said Elijah come on out here and stand here on the mount so Elijah came out 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 the still small voice 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 little signs saying beep beep beep beep turn right beep beep beep beep go forward you know beep beep stop and and that it's some kind of a mystic thing where I'm walking around in a trance you know 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 years ago I was driving up to Ventura to have services in a church up there where I grew up and they had invited me back to speak on a Sunday evening so I decided to go up on Saturday take a leisure drive stay with my aunt in Santa Barbara Saturday night and then drive back to Ventura on Sunday and speak there on Sunday evening and so I had started up to Ventura and I was in Hollywood and I came to Sunset Boulevard and it just flashed to me and I had a convertible flashed on me what a beautiful day why not just flip the top down drive down Sunset Boulevard to Pacific Coast and go up past Malibu I love that drive up the coast through Malibu and Point Mugu and on in that way such a beautiful day you know I thought and just put the top down and take

a drive up the coast so I started winding down you know Sunset Boulevard winds all the way through until it finally drops you there in Santa Monica at the Pacific Coast Highway and as I was coming down the skies were so blue so clear and it was just such a beautiful day spring day and there was a couple who were hitchhiking I thought oh well I'm all by myself might as well pick them up you know so I picked them up and we started asking them questions found out they were from Montana I said well what are you doing here in California they said oh we're looking for work I said well what kind of work do you do I'm a farmer and he said I haven't been able to find anything in Los Angeles I said well where are you going he said well we're going to San Francisco I said well there are no farms in

San Francisco I said it's the same as Los Angeles it's just a big city I said now between here and San Francisco there's a lot of farm country in fact I said I'm going through Ventura I said there's a lot of farms around Ventura there's a lot of ranches and all and I said if you want to really get farm work you better stop in one of these communities between here and San Francisco Salinas or somewhere you're never going to get a job on a farm up there these poor kids they didn't know anything about California they just heard it was sunny and all and they were tired of the snow in Montana and just newly married and decided to move to California and you know get a job then I started witnessing to them about the Lord and when we got to Ventura they decided that they would stay and look for

work there and I drove them by the church where I would be the next evening invited them to come and meet me at the church the next evening and we had prayer with them they both accepted Christ and so I

bid them farewell and went on up to Santa Barbara to stay with my aunt and never really expected to see them again when I got to Santa Barbara my aunt was making enchiladas she was the greatest enchilada maker in the world and the phone rang and it was my mother and there were problems at our home in Santa Ana I had an alcoholic uncle that I kicked out and he came back while I was gone and my mother was quite desperate she couldn't take him it was my dad's brother and she said it's either him or me and so I had to drive right on back to Santa Ana that night and deal with my uncle and get

him out of there for my mother's sake so my whole trip to Santa Barbara was sort of in vain anyhow I thought but then I drove up the next night to Ventura spoke at the church we gave an invitation for those at the end who would like to receive Christ to come forward and this couple who I never expected to see again came forward and so there were several people that came forward that evening and I went down and prayed with many of them and I went up to this young couple and I told them how great it was to see them and how thrilled I was that they were there and they were just beaming all over telling me just how glorious it was you know that they had accepted the Lord and how happy they were and they said this man who came to pray with us I knew him his name is Mr.

Jenkins I grew up in Ventura and I knew him quite well and he was a foreman at the Del Mar Limonere Ranch and so he came forward prayed with them and they shared you know what the situation was so he said hey I've got an opening out on the ranch right now and he hired them and they had a job and housing and everything else and God just put the whole thing together then I got to thinking you know it must have been the Lord that put into my mind why don't you flip the top down and go up the coast you know it seemed like so me because I love the ocean and all it seemed like such a natural thought that I really wasn't aware at that moment in Hollywood that it was actually the Spirit of God speaking to me and directing me to this couple that were really searching for the Lord as much as

anything else because they were wide open to receive the witness and all and yet I realized hey God was directing me because though I love the coast being that well along on my way in the inland route I don't like Sunset Boulevard and all the signals going out to the coast and yet suddenly I realized it was the Lord leading me now it wasn't something mystical and you know there wasn't thunder and lightning and great winds and earthquakes or anything else it was just a very natural way and what the Scripture is saying is that God usually speaks to us in very natural ways 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 in 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 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 he wasn't 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 recommissioned 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 Elijah to take your place and all 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're exaggerating for I have 7000 men in Israel whose knees have not bowed to bow and whose lips have not

kissed his image I only I am left no no you're not alone I've got 7000 God knew them God had been observing so he departed from there and he found Elisha and Elisha was plowing with 12 yoke of oxen before him actually there were 10 before him and he had the 12th 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 him 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 who was presently the king

of Syria gathered all of his host together and there were 32 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 it's mine and so the king of Israel answered and said my lord oh king according to your saying I am thine and all that I have 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 you know everything I have it's yours so Benhadad wasn't satisfied he sent back his messengers again and said thus spaketh 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 you know 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 and 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 of the people that follow me and he said you know if everyone took the dust of Samaria there wouldn't be enough for the number of people I have you know to even have a fistful of dirt I've 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 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 yourself 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 232 after them he numbered the people all of the children of Israel 7000 they went out at noon and oh Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in his pavilions he with his kings and the young men of the princes of the province went out first Benhadad sent out and told them saying there

are they sent they came to Benhadad and said there are men coming out of Samaria and so he said have they come out 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 province came out of the city and the army followed them and they slew everyone as 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 said unto him go and strengthen yourself and mark and see what you're doing for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against you again in other words now strengthen yourself fortify things

because at the end of the year the guy's 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 because there's gods of 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'd be pointing it down that way through the earth and out in space 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 well 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 now 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 the chariots and go up again the second time and so Ben-Hadad got the forces of Syria together and he came up to Apeac 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 they were totally hopelessly outnumbered but the Syrians filled the country 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 you shall know that I am the Lord 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 there in the valleys and wiped out the Syrians really worse this time than before the Syrians were fleeing Ben Hadad 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 will 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 and he

said alright 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 slayed him so he found another man and he said smite me I pray thee and the man smote him and 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 will 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 now it came to pass after these things that there was a fellow by the name of Naboth who had a vineyard down in the area of Mount Gilboa and it was an excellent vineyard and it was next to property that Ahab owned and Ahab desired Naboth's vineyard and so he came to him

and he said I'd like to buy your vineyard name your price and Naboth said hey it's the family's if I sell it then I'm selling that which is the family's property I don't want to sell you the vineyard it's not for sale and so the guy started pouting he was so upset just sitting there pouting and you know someone has crossed him he can't have his way and so he's pouting and his wife says what in the world wrong with you and he said oh I just can't stand it I want that vineyard of Naboth's and all and she says well quit your pouting I'll get you the vineyard if you want the vineyard and so she ordered the men of the city to gather together and she hired a couple of guys to lie against Naboth so the elders were gathered together and Naboth was there and these two men came in and they bore

false witness they said we heard this man curse the king and curse God and so they the penalty for cursing God of course was being stoned to death and so with the two men bearing witness against him

lying as they did they killed Naboth and of course Jezebel just moved in and took his vineyard and gave it as a present to her husband so the word of the Lord came to Elijah saying arise and go and meet Ahab the king of Israel which is in Samaria he's in the vineyard of Naboth he's gone down to possess it and you shall speak unto him saying thus saith the Lord have you killed and taken possession and you shall speak unto him saying thus saith the Lord in the place where the dogs lick the blood of Naboth shall the dogs lick thy blood even thine so Ahab said unto Elijah have you found me my

enemy and he answered I have found you because you have sold yourself to work evil in the sight of the Lord behold I bring evil I will bring evil upon thee and take away your possession and cut off from Ahab all of his descendants and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and like Basha in other words the dynasty the family dynasty is going to be gone and he also spake against Jezebel saying the dog shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel and him that dies of Ahab in the city the dogs will eat him who dies in the field the fowls of the air the vultures will eat and there was none like unto Ahab who did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord whose wife Jezebel stirred him up there is none any worse than this king they did very abominably in

following idols according to all the things that the Amorites had done before them the people that the Lord had cast out of the land now it came to pass when Ahab heard these words that he began really to live more carefully he put on sackcloth he fasted and he lived very carefully and so the Lord came to Elijah and said these things will not happen in his days but in the days of his children so they went for three years without war between Syria and Israel but it came to pass in the third year that Jehoshaphat who was the king of the southern tribes Judah he came up to visit Ahab and the king of Israel that would be Ahab said to his servants Ramoth and Gilead is ours and we be still and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria so he said to Jehoshaphat will you go with me to

battle at Ramoth Gilead and Jehoshaphat said to the king I am as you are my people as your people my horses are as your horses so Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel let's inquire of the Lord and see if we are to go to battle so the king of Israel gathered his prophets together and he said unto them shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to battle or shall I forbear and they said go up for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king so Jehoshaphat said is there the king from Judah said do you have any other prophet that we can ask and so he said there is this one guy Micaiah but that guy never gives me a decent prophecy he is always saying something evil and he said ah don't say that let's call him in and see what he has to say so they in the meantime this one prophet Zedekiah made

some iron horns and he put them on his head and he went running around with these iron horns on his head and he said thus saith the Lord with these shall you push the Syrians until you have consumed them and all the prophets said go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper the Lord is going to deliver it in the king's hands so the messenger who went over to get Micaiah spake unto him and said now look all of the guys have given good prophecies so come on in and say something good don't lay a heavy one on him you know so he said the prophet answered he said as the Lord lives I am only going to tell him and I can only tell him what the Lord tells me to tell him and what the Lord says that's what I'm going to speak so he came to the king and the king said unto him Micaiah shall we go against Ramoth

Gilead or shall we forbear and no doubt he answered him in a very sarcastic way so that Ahab realized that the guy was he probably said just go and prosper for the Lord is going to deliver it into the hand of the king and he said it in such a way that he knew that the guy wasn't sincere and he said how many times have I told you don't tell me anything that is not true in the name of the Lord he said alright you want to

know the truth I saw all of Israel scattered on the hills like sheep that have no shepherd and the Lord said these have no master let them return every man to his house in peace in other words he is prophesying the death of Ahab the shepherd over the people the people are all scattered over the hills because their shepherd has been destroyed and the king of Israel said to

Jehoshaphat didn't I tell you that this guy gave me a bad one never says anything good and the prophet Micaiah went on to say hear the word of the Lord I saw the Lord sitting on his throne and the host of heaven was standing by him on his right hand and on his left and the Lord said who shall persuade Ahab that he might fall be killed at Ramoth Gilead and one suggested this another suggested another thing and there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord and said I will persuade him and the Lord said unto him how and he said well I will go forth and be a lying spirit in his mouth and in the mouth of all of I will go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all of his prophets and he said that will work go ahead very interesting thing Micaiah's vision of heaven I saw the throne of

God all of the host standing around God God said how are we going to get Ahab over there to Ramoth Gilead that he might fall there and the angels were suggesting different things until one spirit came up and said I've got an idea what is it well I'll be a lying spirit in the mouth of all of his prophets the Lord said that will work go ahead why would God commission a lying spirit it doesn't seem you know quite loyal something that we don't often consider is that in a sense Satan Satan is a servant of God he is serving God's purposes that is why God has allowed him to exist that's why God has allowed him freedom he is acting in the sphere of his own free will but yet the controls are ultimately held by God we have made a tragic mistake in our thinking processes as we think of Satan as an

opposite of God Satan is not an opposite of God God is an eternal omnipotent self-existent being whereas Satan is a created being and is in the rank of angels so if you're looking for an opposite of Satan you'd have to look at maybe Michael one of the archangels there you would have opposites but in no way is he an opposite of God no way does he rank even near God he is existing under the total sphere of God and though he is opposed to God he is not an opposite of God in any sense of being an opposite to God who is who is God the eternal omnipotent God Satan is definitely limited in his understanding in his abilities in his powers they are limited by God God says you can go so far no further Satan complained to God the fact of his limitations in the case of Job you put a hedge around that

guy I can't get to him and he was complaining that God had put limitations on what he could do so Satan is only allowed liberty within a limited spoke God puts the limitations on him but he does serve purposes of God thus God can use and often does use Satan or his emissaries to fulfill God's purposes here is a case where God uses a lying spirit to fulfill his purpose he comes and the false prophets give to Ahab these lies encourage him to go against Ramoth Gilead so Ahab then ordered the true prophet Micaiah said put him in prison until I return in peace and he said if you return at all then I'm not a prophet of God so they headed for Ramoth Gilead Jehoshaphat the king from Judah was going with Ahab and as they were getting to Ramoth Gilead against the Syrians Ahab said to Jehoshaphat

hey you take my chariot and all I'm going to put on just the common guard I want to get into the battle and so he took off his king's robes in order that he might just really get into the battle himself he was just sort of thirsting for a little excitement and so he left his chariot the king's chariot got in another chariot and so that he could get into the thick of the battle and in the meantime the Syrian commanders said to his fellows now look all we want is the king so let's concentrate and get hold of Ahab and if we kill him then you know the rest of people will be so demoralized that's all we'll have to do so they saw Jehoshaphat sitting in

Ahab's chariot with Ahab's robe on and so they figured it was Ahab so they started to pursue the one chariot and so Jehoshaphat started going on

the lamb you know and these guys were chasing him because they they weren't really concentrating on battle just on the one guy is all they wanted and when they finally got up to him they realized that it wasn't Ahab that it was Jehoshaphat but and of course this is an interesting scripture a certain man drew a bow at a venture in other words he just you know let go let fly an arrow in the direction of their enemy and actually the arrow hit Ahab and he turned to the driver of his chariot and he said turn and carry me out of the battle because I'm wounded and the battle increased that day and the king was propped up in the chariot against the Syrians but he died at the evening time and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot and there went a proclamation throughout all

of the hosts about the time the sun was setting saying every man to his city and every man to his own country so the king died and was brought to Samaria and they buried the king in Samaria and one washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria and the dogs licked up his blood and they washed his armor according to the word of the Lord which he spake now the rest of the acts of Ahab all that he did the ivory house that he had made all of the cities which he built they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel interestingly enough in the city of Megiddo which is one of the cities that Ahab had rebuilt actually at Megiddo there are about 20 different levels of cities that have been built over cities it's been the battle ground of many ancient battles and so when a city was

destroyed then they just build a new city on top and they have dug down in one cut there the archeologist and there are about 20 different civilizations or different levels of the city now in the level that dates to Ahab's time next to the temple of Bel the ruins of the temple of Bel that Ahab built they found several hundred jars with the skeletons of babies that had been sacrificed by their parents to Bel worship this is what Jezebel and Ahab had introduced to the people and the archeologist uncovered next to the ruins of the temple of Bel built in Megiddo by Ahab these jars with these skeletons of babies sacrificed to this god Bel we understand from this why God wanted this horrible religious system to be utterly wiped out because it did involve the sacrifice the human sacrifice their

own babies unto their worship of their god so we come to the close of Ahab and his son Ahaziah reigned in his place now Jehoshaphat and now shift gears you remember last week we told you we have two kingdoms the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom so meanwhile back in the ranch back in the southern kingdom now we spent a lot of time up in the north not because of Ahab but because of Elijah really he became the central character of the story and so a lot of print is given to Ahab only because of the fact that Elijah was a prominent character during this particular period of their history but back in the southern kingdom where the descendants of David are on the throne Jehoshaphat who was the son of Asa who was a good king for the most part began to reign over Judah in the fourth year

that Ahab was reigning in Israel so they were co-regents for quite a period of time Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he began to reign he reigned for 25 years and he walked in all of the ways of Asa his father who I said was a fairly good king he turned not aside from it doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord nevertheless the high places for pagan worship were not taken away for the people offered burnt incense yet there in the high places and Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel you remember he had come up and was invited by Ahab to go and battle against Ramoth Gilead so there was an alliance between the two kings now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat the wars and so forth they are written in the book of the chronicles of the king of Judah so we will get that

story when we get into chronicles because we do have the chronicles of the kings of Judah though we do not have the chronicles of the kings of Israel and the remnant of the Sodomites which remained in the days of his father Asa he took out of the land and there was then no king in Edom but a deputy that is in the area south of the Dead Sea and on the far bank there is no king only a governor over the land Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharsis to go to Ophir for gold but they went not for the ships were broken up no doubt in a storm at Ezeangeber and so Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat let my servants go with your servants in the ships but Jehoshaphat would not and Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers was buried with his fathers in the city of David and Jehoram his son reigned in his

stead now Ahaziah who was the son of Ahab back up in the north began to reign over Israel and Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah and he reigned for two years he did evil in the sight of the Lord he walked in the ways of his father Ahab and in the ways of his mother that wicked Jezebel and he served Baal and worshipped him and provoked to anger Jehovah the God of Israel according to all that his father had done may the good hand of our Lord be upon you to lead and to guide you in his way that you might walk in his love that you might be filled with his spirit and that you might discover what is God's plan for your life that which God would have for you this week and may the Lord speak to you and may you be very sensitive so that you begin to understand the

voice of the Lord that you might be led by the Spirit of God.

God bless you may he watch over you and keep you in his love.

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