

I KINGS

Please turning your Bibles this evening to I Kings chapter 19 as we continue our study through the Word of God. In our last study we saw the prophet Elijah confront the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah on Mount Carmel. And God gave Elijah a great victory by consuming the sacrifice of Elijah with fire. Prior to Elijah praying for God to accept the sacrifice, the false prophets tried all day and their god Baal could do nothing. In fact, Elijah mocks these false prophets telling them to yell louder, maybe their god can't hear, or he is on vacation or maybe a bathroom break. Which just made them yell even more and cut themselves and yet nothing happened.

And if you remember, prior to this challenge, we are told in I Kings 18:21, “**And Elijah came to all the people, and said, ‘How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.’ But the people answered him not a word.**” Now, after this victory, Elijah tells them to kill these false prophets and they do!

What a mountaintop experience this must have been for Elijah. The problem is, you can't live on the mountaintop. You have to go back into the valley because that is where you grow and Elijah is going to find that out in our study this evening. You see, the wife of king Ahab, Jezebel fed these false prophets and when she finds out that Elijah has had them all killed, she is not going to be happy, and that is putting it mildly! Now, Elijah has just faced 850 false prophets and was victorious, how will he deal with this one woman? Let's begin reading in I Kings chapter 19, starting in verse 1 and see what happens as we study God's Word.

I KINGS 19**VERSES 1-2**

1. As king Ahab returns, he tells his wife all that transpired on Mount Carmel, and how the prophets of Baal were killed. Her response is that she is calling for the head of Elijah, she wants him dead and she vows to destroy Elijah by the following day or let her god kill her. A little bit of anger and bitterness, wouldn't you say? You can tell who wore the pants in this family, and it certainly was not king Ahab. Now think about this for a minute. Elijah and the God he serves, Yahweh, defeated the 850 false prophets and you would think that this would be enough to change her heart and the heart of Ahab, but it wasn't. The whole event on Mount Carmel proved that the god's she was worshipping were nothing but she still refused to turn to the true and living God and thus, she tries to silence those that worship Him!

2. Now this mighty prophet of God, this man of faith who withstood the 850 pagan prophets on Mount Carmel, you would think, upon hearing these words spoken by Jezebel, would say, "I laugh in the face of danger!" Well, he doesn't exactly say that. Look at what he does say and what he does do!

VERSE 3

1. “Help me Mr. Wizard, I don’t want to be a prophet of God anymore!” It is hard to imagine a response like this after Elijah stood up for God in the face of danger. I mean, think about this. He stood against the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah, standing against these 850 pagan prophets and he was all alone in this encounter. And now, one woman sends him running for his life. He goes from Jezreel to Beersheba, the most southern city of Judah, some 80 to 85 miles away from this woman. Do you think he is a little scared? You bet he is! And as we are going to see, Elijah leaves his servant in Beersheba and he is going to travel another days journey away from this wicked woman who wants him dead!

VERSE 4

1. As he gets to Beersheba, he leaves his servant behind, and then heads another 15 miles or so into the Negev desert. What happened to this man of God that would cause him to flee? First of all he was both physically and emotionally drained after this confrontation on Mount Carmel. And secondly, he took his eyes off the Lord. He looked at the situation, saw he was in trouble and too exhausted to fight, and so he flees. And now this fear has bred **DEPRESSION, DISCOURAGEMENT**, and even **SUICIDAL** thoughts! Elijah was praying for the Lord to take his life and thankfully, the Lord did not answer that prayer, at least He didn’t answer in the way Elijah wanted it to be answered!

2. I hate to say this, but I am thankful that I am not alone in feeling this way. I know when I physically overdo it, when I am emotionally drained; it is easy to become depressed when you look at the work and those coming against it. It is easy to become depressed when it seems like things are not going like they should. And then the Devil even puts thoughts of suicide in us, thankfully I have not felt that way, but you do feel like giving up like Elijah did! You see, when we take our eyes off the Lord, we sink as fast as Peter did when he was walking on the water to the Lord! Fear is the opposite of faith and leads to all kinds of misconceptions about what is going to happen. Which again makes us depressed, discouraged and sometimes even suicidal. And please hear me out on this. It is important to take times of rest; you need to be refreshed because ministry is hard. My wife and I try to get away twice a year, and it is a time where we can spend alone together and get refreshed and I think it benefits our marriage and the ministry!

VERSES 5-8

1. Instead of rebuking Elijah for his failure in faith, God allows him time to rest; He even gives him food to eat. Yes, the spiritual life is very important but so is taking care of our physical bodies, we need to eat and we need to rest or we will burn out. Now, in saying that, there are some that just want to eat and sleep and that is not good either, there is then a time to move and that is what the Lord instructs Elijah to do next. You see, you can't sleep all day, and that is what depression does many times. It cripples us so that we can't move. So God feeds him, gives him water, gives him rest and now it is time to move and what a journey this is.

It is a journey from Beersheba to Mount Horeb or Mount Sinai, about 200 miles, which would normally take about 14 days if you pushed it, about 14 miles per day. Now it says that God's food sustains Elijah for 40 days, as he travels from Beersheba to Mount Horeb, or Mount Sinai, which was a miracle. Why did it take him 40 days when it should have taken him only about 2 weeks? I like what one writer had to say. He wrote, "Elijah's forty-day journey is not without significance. Indeed, a straight trip from Beersheba would require little more than a quarter of that time. Therefore the period is designedly symbolic. As the children of Israel had a notable spiritual failure and so were to wander forty years in the wilderness, so a defeated Elijah was to spend forty days in the desert." (Patterson and Austel). God was teaching him a lesson and there is more to it than just this, as we will see. You see, we are going to find out that Elijah is moving in the opposite direction that God really wanted him to go.

VERSES 9-10

1. First of all we are told that Elijah went into a cave on Mount Sinai or Mount Horeb and in the Hebrew we have the definitive article here, "**the**" and it may be suggesting that it is the cave in which Moses had hidden in Exodus chapter 33:22 when he experienced the presence of Yahweh! It is possible, but I would not be dogmatic about that.

2. Now what I want you to notice is the question that God asks Elijah and then the response of Elijah. God said, “**What are you doing here?**” God did not ask Elijah, “Why are you here?” Elijah has no problem telling God why he is down there in this cave, but he never answers the question of why he was down in this cave! And what we see here is that Elijah has this little pity party for himself, and tells God that no one is left but him, and now they want to kill him. That is not true as we will see tonight, but Elijah thinks it is, “Nobody loves you Lord like me and now they want to kill me!” How sad but how untrue! And here’s the thing, God never called Elijah to be a *CAVE MAN*, but a *CALLED MAN*! He was of no use in this cave, out of the will of God. What is Elijah really doing in this cave? What is Elijah accomplishing down in this cave? The only answer is *NOTHING!*

3. We can behave like Elijah many times and have ourselves a little pity party! We can isolate ourselves in the cave of our homes, or the cave of our lives and not let anyone in. We might think that no one loves God like we do and thus, what is the use. And the problem is, the more you stay in this cave of self-pity the worse it is going to get. The only solution is to turn to God and get up and move, do something for the Lord because that is why you were created, for His good pleasure not yours! And I will tell you this, when you do what you were created for, there truly is joy, peace, there are those times of refreshing but we have to get our eyes off of self and get up and move as we seek direction from the Lord! We too are not called to be *CAVE MEN*, but a *CALLED MEN*! May we not forget that!

VERSES 11-12

1. As important as this was for Elijah to learn it is just as important for us to learn especially in the days we are living in. You see, God is making a very important point here. Elijah was trying to hear God's voice in a powerful way and people today are looking or trying to hear the voice of God in every kind of emotional experience. First we see this violent wind that smashes rocks into pieces, but God was not in the wind. Next, there was this violent earthquake, which shook the ground violently, he felt the earth move under his feet you might say, but God was not in the earthquake. And then there was this fire that blazes across the land, burning everything up, but God was not in the fire. You have to be kidding me; God was in none of those powerful things? That is correct.

You see, after that display, there was a small voice, a whisper, and God spoke. He was in that small voice. I wonder if we are looking for God in all the wrong places, and the noise is so loud that we can't hear Him? I think that is our problem most of the time, for to hear God speak, that gentle whisper, you must be quiet and listen to what He is saying. All those noisy distractions must be removed. God moves in a quiet way. God uses little things to accomplish His purpose. As someone has said, "Great doors are swung on little hinges." God uses small things to open mighty doors. That is what Elijah had to learn and that is what we must also learn!

VERSES 13-14

1. First of all we see Elijah wrap himself in his mantle and you may wonder why? I believe it is because he knew he was in the presence of God and respected that, knowing he could not stand before God as a sinner. That was good, but there is still this pity party to deal with. You see, God asks Elijah the same question, “**What are you doing here Elijah?**” And Elijah responds by telling God why he is there once again. Thus, he goes back to his little pity party, not being used by God, and so concerned that he is the only one left who truly loves God. And again, we will see that is not true and God will correct him on this in a minute!

VERSES 15-17

1. Elijah is down, he is depressed, he is discouraged and even thinking of suicide and what does God do, “Oh poor Elijah, you have had it so rough. It has been a tough life and you just stay in this cave and enjoy your little pity party!” No, that is not what God does. God tells Elijah to get to work, don’t stay in this cave where you are doing nothing. What a great response by God to Elijah’s actions. Spurgeon said this in regards to what the Lord was doing in Elijah’s life, “Then the Lord did what perhaps was best of all for Elijah, *he gave him some more work to do*. He sent him off about his Master’s business again; and I warrant you that, when Elijah went back over that road, it was with a very different step from that which brought him down to Beersheba. He had come along terrified and distressed; but now he goes back with the majesty that belongs to the Tishbite, he is afraid of no Jezebel now.” What a great lesson for us, don’t stay in that cave of self pity but get to work for the Lord and see how He will lift your spirits!

2. Here was the problem for Elijah. Elijah moved southward when God really wanted him to go northward, to Damascus. When you are not listening to God's direction, you will find yourself opposite where you should be. Elijah was in a cave; God put him back to work and sent him on his way. I like that!

3. Here is the work that Elijah had to do. He first is told that he was to anoint Hazael as king over Syria. Then he was to anoint Jehu as the king to succeed the corrupt Ahab. And lastly, he was to anoint Elisha as the next prophet, taking over your position.

VERSE 18

1. And now we see God correct the false picture that Elijah had, that he alone loved the Lord and there was no one else. God tells Elijah that he is not alone and that God has 7,000 who love him and have not bowed the knee to Baal. God is putting things into perspective for Elijah, giving him the correct picture of things and He will do the same in our lives! And listen to what Spurgeon had to say regarding these worshippers of God, "Yet, all the while that vile idolatry was spreading in Israel, the worship of the true God was being retained by seven thousand faithful souls, though Elijah did not know that there was even one beside himself. How were they won to Jehovah? Certainly not by Elijah's impressive demonstration on the top of Carmel, for they were loyal to the Lord before that . . . The still small voice had been doing for Israel what Elijah could not do."

VERSES 19-21

1. As Elijah passes by Elisha, who was out plowing the fields with 12 teams of oxen, Elisha working with the last pair, Elijah throws his mantle upon him. This mantle was nothing more than a shawl that was a symbol of authority and ministry. Pairing these two guys together was like having the *DYNAMIC DUO* on your side and that was a good thing when you had the *DEMONIC DUO* of king Ahab and his wife Jezebel to deal with!

Now Elisha tells Elijah that he wanted to say goodbye to his family and Elijah tells him, **“Go back again, for what have I done to you?”** It almost sounds like a rebuke, but I don't think it is. All Elijah could be saying to him is this, “Go back, but remember what I have done to you.” In other words, don't lose sight of the work that God has called you to do and I don't think Elisha does as we see here.

The next thing we see Elisha do is he takes the tools of his trade, the implements of his livelihood, burning the wooden yokes, boiled his oxen, and shared this meal with his family and friends. Why did he do this? I think Elisha was telling everyone that he was not coming back. He had burned the bridges behind him you might say, everything that was tied to his old way of life was now gone, and he is now wholly devoted to the Lord, no turning back. And please understand, with that many oxen, it would seem that he was wealthy or at least his family was and yet, he cast it aside for the work that God had called him to do! What an example for us!

2. You see, there is a cost to true discipleship. It will cost you something. Turn to Luke 9:57-62 and let's look at the verses that deal with the true cost of discipleship and what it has to say to us. We are told, **“Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, ‘Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.’ Then He said to another, ‘Follow Me.’ But he said, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.’ And another also said, ‘Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.’”**

It is amazing the number of people who want to follow Jesus until they find out the cost, their lives! Are you willing to sacrifice your life in service to follow Jesus? If not then don't follow. There is a cost involved!

And please understand that Jesus is not being harsh or unloving here by not allowing this man to bury his father. First of all, if he buried his father at this point it would be murder for his father wasn't dead yet. This excuse went something like this, “Let me stay until my father dies and then I will follow you!” That could have been another 10 to 20 years or more. His father wasn't even sick! And the point that Jesus is making is this, following Him is something you do now, you don't put it off until a more convenient time for that time may never come! And there were all kinds of excuses why they could not follow Jesus; they were just too busy I guess!

The point is this; you need to serve the Lord wholeheartedly and not halfheartedly. You see, a farmer would plow his field and keep his rows straight by focusing on an object in the distance, like a tree. But, if he was distracted, began looking side-to-side and behind him, his rows would not be straight but they would zigzag back and forth all over the place. The point is this, we need to keep our eyes upon Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith and our life will be on track. If you are being distracted with all kinds of other things than the Lord, looking at the world behind you, you are not fit for the kingdom of God. Ouch, that hurt! Paul put it this way in II Timothy 4:10, “**for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica . . .**” You see, the reality is, how can you serve God and this world, you can’t! For Jesus, “**He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem.**” Can you do the same, set your face steadfastly towards Jesus and follow Him, and don’t be distracted by the things the world is throwing at you?

In fact, Jesus is saying that you can’t follow Him and still be in love with the past. You can’t desire the past things you did and try and serve Him. You have to break those ties, burn those bridges, and be wholly devoted to Him! Elisha was. Remember the song, I Have Decided To Follow Jesus; it goes like this, “I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back. The cross before me. The world behind me. No turning back, no turning back.” Keep that perspective! No turning back!



Elijah's victory on Mount Carmel ended with the slaying of 450 prophets of Baal (18:20–40). His ministry spanned Canaan from the Brook Cherith near his birthplace (17:1–7) to Zarephath where he performed the miracle that sustained the widow and her son, and to as far south as Mount Horeb (not shown). In Samaria, Elijah denounced King Ahab's injustice against Naboth of Jezreel (21:17–29). Near Jericho, he separated the waters of the Jordan River to cross over and subsequently was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:1–12). Elisha healed Naaman of leprosy in the Jordan River (5:1–19) and led the blinded Syrians to their defeat at Samaria (6:8–23). In Damascus, Elisha prophesied the death of Ben-Hadad and the succession of Hazael as king of Syria.

- Radmacher, Earl D. ; Allen, Ronald Barclay ; House, H. Wayne:
Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary

I KINGS 20**VERSES 1-6**

1. If you remember back in I Kings chapter 15, Asa, king of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, made a deal with Ben-Hadad to go against Baasha, the king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Now, some 40 years or so later, his son is coming against the Northern Kingdom of Israel once again, most likely trying to enlarge its own borders. And as Ben-Hadad II surrounded Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, he sends in a messenger to let king Ahab know his request. He wanted all the silver, gold, his finest wives and children. Ahab, being in no position to argue, tells Ben-Hadad II, all is yours. Can you imagine that, he did not fight against him but gave into the pressure! Now Ben-Hadad II felt it was just a little too easy, so he tries to get more out of this deal from Ahab. Whatever is pleasant in the king's eyes, they will take for themselves. Not a good situation to say the least!

VERSES 7-9

1. Ahab sends word back through this messenger to Ben-Hadad II that the silver, the gold, his wives and children, are all his, but don't touch my toys! Interesting what makes him change his mind about this deal. And the elders who told the king not to give in also understood that if they did, they would lose their sovereignty as a nation.

VERSES 10-12

1. Ben-Hadad II speaks harsh words to strike fear in the heart of his enemy. But Ahab says it is one thing to put on your armor, and another thing to take it off, speaking of being victorious in the battle. In other words, “Don’t count your chickens before they are hatched.” And thus, we see the Syrians prepare to strike the Northern Kingdom of Israel and we see the Northern Kingdom of Israel prepare to be attacked! And with the number of people that they were bringing against Israel, they needed to brace themselves for a furious attack!

VERSES 13-15

1. God tells king Ahab, through this prophet, not Elijah or Elisha, that He will give Ahab the victory against Syria. And to show that it is not by the hands of your seasoned military men, put the young leaders in front. All this was being done to show Ahab who God is! But king Ahab should have known this!

2. Why would God do such a thing for this wicked king? Folk’s, it just shows us the rich love God is showing to this wicked king. It is as Paul said in Ephesians 3:18-19, that we **“May be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”** God gives people so many chances to turn to Him, to repent of their sin but He will never force anyone to receive Him. It is the choice of the individual and Ahab had his chances, but he never does repent and get right with God, which is very tragic but we still see that today with people!

VERSES 16-21

1. Ben-Hadad II and his men were not taking this battle too seriously, thus, they drank so much they were drunk. And when word gets out that an army is coming from Samaria, he tells his men to take them alive, so that he can deal with them later. Torture and cruel death was one way of disposing of the enemy.

Here is a summary of what transpired, “The battle strategy appears to have been to send out the small but well trained advance party who could perhaps draw near to the Syrians without arousing too much alarm and then, at a given signal, initiate a charge that, joined by Ahab’s main striking force, would both catch the drunken Arameans off guard and throw them into confusion. The plan was more successful than Ahab dared to imagine.” (Patterson and Austel). So God gives Israel this great victory, even though they did not deserve it but there is a lesson to learn from all this as we read on.

VERSE 22

1. It is one thing to rejoice in the victory that God had given them, but it was also important to prepare, to be on guard, to always be ready for battle and that is what the prophet of God warns Ahab. He tells him not to get puffed up in this victory, the enemy will return in the spring. The enemy never gives up and we will do battle until we go to be with the Lord. It doesn't matter if you are 16 or 116, Satan does not stop fighting and thus, we need to be ready, we need to keep our walk in line, we need to look to the Lord to be the strength of our lives! It is as David said in Psalm 20:7-8, "**Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They have bowed down and fallen; but we have risen and stand upright.**" The reality is, it doesn't matter how big the enemy may be, all that matters is that we are walking with the Lord and He will give us the victory no matter how outnumbered we are!

VERSE 23

1. This sounds very strange but it is what many of the pagan's believed, that the gods were local gods. Thus, since the God of Israel defeated them in the mountains, they would fight now in the plains. Our God is not geographically limited, but is omnipresent, that is His presence fills the universe.

2. Spurgeon put it like this as he applies this to our lives. He wrote, “The art of god-making is very common among men. Instead of going to revelation to see what God is, and humbly believing in him as he reveals himself, men sit down and consider what sort of God he ought to be, and in so doing they are no wiser than the man who makes a god of mud or wood or stone.”

He goes on to say in regards to our God being able to deliver us from all kinds of situations, from the difficult ones to the ones that are found in prosperity. He wrote, “Depend upon it, since Satan could not kill the church by roaring at her like a lion, he is now trying to crush her by hugging her like a bear. There is truth in this, but it is not all the truth. Do you really think, my brethren, that God cannot preserve his Church in the particular trial through which she is now passing? Is he the God of the hills of persecution, but not the God of the valleys of prosperity?” That is something for us to think about, especially in the days we are living in.

And lastly, he wrote this, “Will God aid a Whitfield and not help a poor local preacher holding forth upon the green? Will he assist the earnest minister who addresses thousands, and desert the simple girl who teaches a dozen little children the old, old story of the cross? Is this after the fashion of God, to patronize the eminent and neglect the lowly? Does Jesus despise the day of small things?” Never forget that, our God fights for the strong, the powerful and the weak, you and me!

VERSES 24-26

1. This may have made sense to them, to fight the Northern Kingdom of Israel in plains since the God of Israel must be a local God, but their theology was wrong. And Ben-Hadad II is taking this battle a little more seriously than their first encounter with Israel. He now places men who could fight, instead of politicians in his army. And they are not going to get drunk before battle either!

2. Also keep in mind that this Aphek is not the Philistine city where the Ark was lost back in I Samuel 4:1. This is another location that was located just east of the Jordan in northern Gilead.

VERSES 27-28

1. It seems that when the people of God are at war, they are outnumbered and the same is true here. Israel was far outnumbered by this massive Syrian army, but as I have said, “One plus God is a majority!”

2. Now why does God do this? Well, specifically here, God is going to show them that He is not just the God of the mountains, but over the entire universe. In I Kings 8:27 Solomon said, “**But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!**” And Adam Clarke tells us, “God resents their blasphemy, and is determined to punish it. They shall now be discomfited in such a way as to show that God’s power is every where, and that the multitude of a host is nothing against him.”

You see, as outnumbered as they were, they could in no way take credit for this victory and that is the point, as the Lord said, “**you shall know that I am the LORD.**” They should have recognized that after the first victory, but God is gracious and merciful and He is showing them again, and He is also showing the Syrians!

VERSES 29-30

1. For six days they camped opposite each other, trying to intimidate the other side with trash talk and all kinds of noise. And on the seventh day they began to fight, and Israel once again defeated the Syrian army, killing 100,000-foot soldiers. As the rest of the people fled to Aphek, 27,000 were killed as a wall fell upon them, but Ben-Hadad II escaped. What a stroke of luck, right? Wrong, this was the hand of God that gave the Northern Kingdom of Israel victory over the Syrians! There is no way that Israel should have won this battle but they did because God gave them the victory and that is true in our own lives. There is no way we should win the battles we face except for the fact that God will give us the victory if we would walk in faith!

VERSES 31-34

1. The kings of Israel were not merciful by our standards, but they were merciful when compared to the other nations around them. So the Syrians are appealing to the mercy of Israel to spare their lives, looking for any sign that might give them some hope in this matter. And as they see a glimmer of hope, they bring their king, Ben-Hadad II before Ahab. And make no mistake about it; Ben-Hadad II has his life on the line. Thus, he offers Ahab some of the cities back, which his father took from Israel. And king Ahab makes this treaty with Ben-Hadad II, and because of that treaty, judgment was going to come upon him. You never make a treaty with the enemy, but you destroy the enemy!

2. In II Corinthians 6:14-18 Paul tells us, **“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.’ Therefore ‘Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.’ I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the Lord Almighty.”**

Now we have spoken before of this verse and how it applies to dating and marriage and that is true, we are not to date or marry an unbeliever. But I think Paul's point is even more than that. He is speaking of false teachers, false doctrine, that we are not to unite ourselves with people that are not saved for any cause. And I think that is important for us as Christians today where we tend to unite for a good cause with anyone and that is what we are not to do!

VERSES 35-38

1. Who was this prophet? Again, we can't be sure, but Russell Dilday made this observation and it may be true. He wrote, "Although he is not named, Josephus believed the anonymous 'man of God' introduced in verse 35 was Micaiah who figures so prominently in the next story. He suggested it was in retaliation for Micaiah's prophetic condemnation that the king put him in prison." Thus, it is possible that Micaiah is this prophet, but again, we can't be sure.

Now when you look at what was done with this man who refused to let this prophet strike him, it does seem very unfair. This prophet wanted his neighbor to strike him, and because he refused, a lion killed him, really? Why would God do that? God spoke through these prophets, and God wanted obedience from his people. This prophet is going to find another man, and I think you know what he will do. And there is something else that Adam Clarke points out that makes more sense in how strong this punishment was. He wrote, "This seems a hard measure, but there was ample reason for it. This person was also one of the sons of the prophets, and he knew that God frequently delivered his counsels in this way, and should have immediately obeyed; for the smiting could have had no evil in it when God commanded it, and it could be no outrage or injury to his fellow when he himself required him to do it."

2. And this prophet goes out to look for another person to strike him and he is willing and gives him a right hook or whatever he does and he inflicts a very noticeable wound. Thus, this prophet disguises himself by placing a bandage over his eyes or eye, the idea here is that part of his face was covered, and now he is going to wait for king Ahab to come by!

VERSES 39-40

1. This prophet gives Ahab a little object lesson that is going to catch him in his own failure towards God. The prophet tells the story that he was involved in, that his prisoner escaped, thus, the captor is responsible for the life of the captive. And Ahab tells him; he is guilty and needs to make restitution for the prisoner he lost.

2. Listen to how G. Campbell Morgan illustrates this in the life of a teacher of God's Word. He wrote, "If a man is called to preach the Word, and becomes busy over a hundred things other than that of his central work, and so loses the opportunity to preach, his failure is complete. That which is our God-appointed work, we must do. If we fail in that, the fact that we have been 'busy here and there,' doing all sorts of other things, is of no avail."

That is something I learned for the most part, very early on in ministry. I tried to do it all and that did not work. My work is prayer and teaching the Word of God. Now, I have to admit that I still get caught up doing lots of things, but that is just me. But my focus needs to be God's Word, teaching it, and prayer and God does not e-mail me the messages on Thursday evenings or Sunday mornings. I need to study and prepare and God does bless that. He makes the words I speak minister to you, not because my words are so great, but our God is so great and His Word will not return void, it will accomplish what He sent it to do in our lives if we allow it!

3. And Spurgeon makes the application to all of us as he wrote, "I want you all to remember this morning that if any portion of life has not been spent in God's service *it is gone*. Time past is gone. You can never have it back again, not even the last moment which just now glided by." Something for us to think about and then put this into action, serve the Lord as He leads!

VERSES 41-43

1. The prophet tells Ahab that judgment is coming upon him for letting an enemy slip out of his hands. Ben-Hadad II was to be killed, but instead, a treaty was made with him.

Now this should have been a time of great rejoicing because of Israel's victory over the Syrians. Instead, the king returns home, in Samaria, sullen and displeased, why? Because he was disobedient to the Word of God, he did not obey God's Word but made a treaty with the enemy! There is great joy in doing the will of God. There is also great sadness in disobeying the will of God. You see, there is no real joy or satisfaction that can be obtained outside the will of God, not any that is lasting.

2. As I close this evening I want you to notice something that is very important. Ahab was sullen and displeased but he was not repentant. Is that a big deal? You bet it is. Paul, in II Corinthians 7:10, "**For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.**" The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, "**For godly grief and the pain God is permitted to direct, produce a repentance that leads and contributes to salvation and deliverance from evil, and it never brings regret; but worldly grief (the hopeless sorrow that is characteristic of the pagan world) is deadly [breeding and ending in death].**" And The Living Bible puts it like this, "**For God sometimes uses sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek eternal life. We should never regret his sending it. But the sorrow of the man who is not a Christian is not the sorrow of true repentance and does not prevent eternal death.**"

We don't like to talk about repentance today, even as Christians, but it is important. For the lost, many times they are sorry they got caught doing something wrong, but there is no true repentance. And for the Christian, they can't lose their salvation and thus, they feel there is no real need to turn from sin because it is under the blood. Folks, that is wrong and that is dangerous. You see, repentance speaks of a turning, a turning from sin and to God. If you don't as a Christian that fellowship with God is broken and He will chasten you. For an unbeliever, God will use things in their life to get them to turn to Him, but it is always their choice but there are consequences to either decision. One leads to life, true repentance, and one leads to death, the sorrow of the world! For Ahab, his sorrow was of the world, it was not a true repentance and he will die in his sins! May we not forget that!