

Commentary on 1 Kings chapter 18, by Chuck Smith 9.21.22

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

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

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

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

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

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

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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 ([1Ki 18:1](#)).

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 towards the Mediterranean to see if there were any clouds coming. And he sends his servant out seven times but his prayer and sending his servant out looking for a cloud is related to his 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.

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So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. And in the area of Samaria, [the Northern Kingdom,] there was a horrible famine ([1Ki 18:2](#)).

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.) ([1Ki 18:3-4](#))

And took care of them as they were hiding from Jezebel, who had of course, ordered all of the prophets of God slain.

And 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 ([1Ki 18:5](#)).

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 he has been after you, 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's 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.

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"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's here." So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and he told Ahab, "Elijah's over here."

So Ahab came and [it is interesting] Ahab said unto him, Are you the one that has troubled Israel ([1Ki 18:17](#))?

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.

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's blaming Elijah for the judgment of God. "Are you the one that troubles Israel?" And Elijah's 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've followed Baal. Now therefore send, and gather me together all Israel to the mount Carmel, and bring in the prophets of Baal all four hundred and fifty of them, and the prophets of the groves the four hundred 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 four hundred and fifty men. Now give us two bullocks; and 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

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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] It is well spoken ([1Ki 18:18-24](#)).

So here is Elijah making an open challenge to the prophets of Baal.

So Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, choose one of the bullocks for yourself, dress it first; for you got a lot of you guys; call on the name of your god, but don't put any fire under it. And they took the bullock which was given to them, they dressed it, they called on the name of Baal from morning until noon, saying, O 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 is a god; lest maybe he's in conversation, or maybe he's on vacation, or he could be asleep, and you need to wake him up ([1Ki 18:25-27](#)).

So why don't you scream a little louder?

And so they cried all the louder, they cut themselves in great religious zeal with knives, with lancets, till the blood was gushing out all over them ([1Ki 18:28](#)).

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 twelve 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 pour it on the burnt sacrifice, and 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. It came to pass at the time of the evening offering, that 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

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servant, and that I have done all of these things at thy word. Hear me, O 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 eight hundred and fifty 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 toward the Mediterranean. And he went up, and looked, he said, There is nothing. He said, Go again. And he sent him seven times. And it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there is arising 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 ([1Ki 18:29-45](#))

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 ([1Ki 18:46](#)).

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 are 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

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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 am in 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 there are people who say, "God never responds to me." Well, did you give Him a chance? Did you really listen? Did you wait for the response from God?