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**B0931 – August 2, 2009 – Elijah's Content With Baal Prophets**

I want to spend a few minutes to give the background for a scene we are going to study in 1 Kgs 18. This is the famous Elijah at Mt Carmel, very much a crisis event in the history of Israel; a lot of issues were resolved at Mt Carmel. Carmel isn't just one mountain, it's a range of mountains. In the text you read where Elijah ran to Jezreel before the chariot of Ahab, that's about 23 miles, so when it says he ran before the chariot in 1 Kings 18 and then in 1 Kings 19 he's tired and depressed.

Alright let's look at how we get into this 18<sup>th</sup> chapter. Our whole approach has been to go from key event to key event. We've gone through the key event of the Call of Abraham, the Exodus, Mt Sinai, the Conquest and Settlement, The Rise and Reign of King David, the Golden Era of Solomon; that was the high point of the kingdom. And now we're looking at the Division of the Kingdom. In the Division of the Kingdom you have three downward steps toward apostasy. First in Rehoboam's day you have Jeroboam and the northern tribes Rejecting the Davidic Dynasty. That fractures the kingdom. Second, Jeroboam Rejected the Jerusalem Temple, including the Levitical priesthood, the feast calendar and in that vacuum he set up a man-made religion with a Biblical vocabulary. I mention "with a Biblical vocabulary" because false religion likes to use the same vocabulary as true religion, but filled with different meaning. Then when Ahab comes to the throne we have the third step down which is Rejection of YHWH Himself. Ahab married Jezebel, the daughter of the King of Tyre and Sidon, who was one of the great priests in the ancient world for Canaanite religion. Jezebel is his little girl and so she's raised in this religion to become a zealous defender of Canaanite religion in the land of Israel, so the kingdom of YHWH is under attack. We'll see how that turns out today.

Before we get to 1 Kgs 18 remember that the events we are looking at have to be seen in light of the Mosaic Law. The prophets are not social reformers. That's the kind of stuff that you get in a liberal classroom somewhere but that's not Biblical. The prophets are men who acted as prosecuting attorneys for God. They were men who pierced history with a reminder of the word of God and they added a fresh word of God, because keep in mind the Bible was being written in that day. They're adding to the Torah. The Levites taught the Torah, the first five books. The prophets added to those books, Joshua, Judges and so forth. They dare not add those books carelessly. They went back to the Torah and add books only as the word of the Lord came to them. We went over the two tests of a prophet, let's review.

How could you tell a false prophet? Test 1: Deut 13 is the comparison of the prophet's word with the Torah; was there a theological conflict going on between the so-called prophet and Torah. The important fact in T-1 is that it didn't matter whether the guy impressed you with his miracles; actual, real miracles are not authenticators by themselves. There has to be a theological continuity between the living prophet and the Torah, and if there isn't theological continuity he's killed, because being a false prophet was a capital offense. Why do you suppose that was a capital offense? Because it was the umbilical cord of the nation. The kingdom lived or died on the basis of the word of God, so if you messed with the word of God you were tampering with the very thing that connected the nation to God, so it was a capital offense.

Test 2 of a false prophet, Deut 18, was that his prophecy did not come to pass. 100% accuracy was required, 99% doesn't cut it. 100% accuracy because the word of God never fails to accomplish. Now, we want to go back and ask ourselves if that really is the case, then in the 1 Kgs 18 story, we ought to see these two tests working. So let's turn to 1 Kgs 18. Let's compare and see if we find these two tests: T-1 one is a test of orthodoxy, does it line up with previous Scripture; T-2 is the miracle test, does the miracle come to pass.

At this point in the history of the nation the apostasy has gotten so bad that the state is now officially persecuting the true prophets, not just ignoring them, now it's actively persecuting them. We see signs of this here. 1 Kgs 18:1, "Now it came about 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 on the face of the earth.'" For three years God has withheld rain; the

economy of this nation is a wreck. But God is a God of grace and God is not going to let the nation be totally destroyed, but at the same time they're God's nation and He is a holy righteous Father and He is going to discipline His nation like a good father disciplines a son. The authority issue is going to be resolved. God will not permit His people to act in certain ways without taking corrective action. That's the story of this whole process.

So for three years the Lord is disciplining His nation. He isn't chastening it to the point of extinction, although He will later under certain conditions. The point that He's saying here is I've chastened you three years, now let's see if I've brought anyone to faith and repentance in this kingdom. To get some insight on those years, the Jews recorded some of the details in the rabbinical Haggada, we're not saying this is inspired, but it gives some insight. "In the first year everything stored in the houses was eaten up. In the second, the people supported themselves with what they could scrape together in the fields. The flesh of the clean animals sufficed for the third year; in the fourth the sufferers resorted to the unclean animals; in the fifth, to the reptiles and insects; and in the sixth the monstrous thing happened that women, crazed by hunger, consumed their own children as food.... In the seventh year, men sought to gnaw the flesh from their own bones." That may be a bit of an exaggeration but if you compare that with Lev 26 and Deut 28 you see a lot of parallels to the cursings section. But now the discipline has gone on long enough and God is going to bless, but in doing this several factors come to light. So watch what happens. 1 Kgs 18:2, "So Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. Now the famine was severe in Samaria. <sup>3</sup>And Ahab called Obadiah who was over the household." Notice this, this is interesting, think about verse 3, here's the king of the northern kingdom, he has ignored the prophets. We said in chapter 13 last time there's evidence that the prophets in the north weren't speaking out, they were keeping quiet. The only prophets actively speaking out against Ahab came from the south into the north to carry the message of the word of God. But that is not to say there wasn't a set of believing prophets in the north. And Obadiah was one of those prophets functioning inside the very bureaucracy of Ahab.

So it shows you in spite of the fact that Ahab came to office with a queen who was importing her foreign agenda, her pagan agenda, and trying to impose it upon the nation, he had pockets of resistance inside his own bureaucracy. Here Obadiah, verse 3, it says "(Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly; <sup>4</sup>for

it came about, when Jezebel destroyed the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took a hundred prophets and hid them by fifties in a cave, and provided them with bread and water). <sup>5</sup>Then Ahab said to Obadiah, ‘Go through the land to all the springs of water and to all the valleys; perhaps we will find grass and keep the horses and mules alive, and not have to kill some of the cattle.’ So they go out to survey it, and notice in verse 6 that evidently Obadiah’s very high up in the bureaucracy, which is sort of interesting that this goes on, all the while Jezebel is out to kill these guys.

The story goes on in verses 7-16 to show how he meets Elijah, how he’s afraid that if he goes back and tells Ahab that he met Elijah, then Ahab will kill him because he’s been looking for Elijah all over the place and now he finds out he’s on the doorstep. So Obadiah’s afraid. <sup>17</sup>When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is this you, you troubler of Israel?” Why does Ahab consider Elijah a troublemaker? What had the northern kingdom set up under Jeroboam? A false religion, a man-made religion. And so any true prophet of the Lord is a threat to that because they promote the true religion. So Ahab considered these guys disruptors, troublemakers which is a sign of apostasy. Just watch, the truth tellers will always be marked men, they’ll be called divisive troublemakers, why do you have to make a fuss about everything? Because it’s false religion. It’s not worship of the true God and by Ahab’s time there had come to be two gods.

So this is time for a confrontation and we’re going to see these two tests applied on Mt Carmel. In verse 19 he had told him, “Now then send *and* gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, *together* with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.” He wants a gathering of the people, so whatever this contest is going to be, he’s calling men and women to come from all over the northern kingdom to witness this. This is not a small group of people; there are thousands of people in the northern kingdom, they are to come because a truth issue has to be decided: who is the true God? Who are the true prophets of God? And who are we going to worship? Elijah is going to take everybody on.

Verse 20, “So Ahab sent *a message* among all the sons of Israel and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel. <sup>21</sup>Elijah came near to all the people and said, “How long *will* you hesitate between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer him

a word. <sup>22</sup>Then Elijah said to the people, "I alone am left a prophet of the LORD, but Baal's prophets are 450 men." And here he sets it up, you want to watch how the Lord's prophets set the agenda, they don't let the pagans set the tone, God's agenda sets the tone. <sup>23</sup>"Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire *under it*; and I will prepare the other ox and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire *under it*. <sup>24</sup>"Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD, and the God who answers by fire, He is God." And all the people said, "That is a good idea."

Can you see one of these tests coming up? Which of those two tests is he using? Test two, Deut 18, because he's saying if I'm a prophet my word shall come to pass. If Baal's men are prophets their word will come to pass. So he's setting up the agenda straight out of the word of God, he's not inventing anything new. The more you know the Bible the more you see that the NT isn't really new, there's a lot in the NT that's the same thing as the OT, it just seems to be new because we never read the OT. It's new to us. <sup>25</sup>So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one ox for yourselves and prepare it first for you are many, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it*." He lets them set up the whole experiment, notice he goes so far as to say, you pick your own thing. Verse 26, "Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it and called on the name of Baal from morning until noon saying, "O Baal, answer us." But there was no voice and no one answered. And they leaped about the altar which they made. <sup>27</sup>It came about at noon, that Elijah mocked them..." Now here's one of the great passages of Scripture because Elijah is looked upon in the Bible as sort of like John the Baptist. Some of these prophets were not looked upon as Mr Nice-Guys; this is not how to win a lot of friends and gain popularity. But he has a purpose. He's up against this very serious issue; whether the kingdom of God is going to survive in history is the issue. The thing is threatened because of the Baal religion that's infiltrated and taking over. So he's not witnessing to one person, he's witnessing to the entire nation. The guys practically by himself and he's going after the primary target, the leaders of the false religious system. Now he begins to couch it in the silliness in which it should be couched. He said, "Call out with a loud voice, for he is a god; either he is occupied or gone aside, or is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and needs to be awakened." The interesting thing about all of those activities is that they're all human; they're all typical of limited people. Do you notice after he

says “Call out with a loud voice” he puts a little clause in there, he tells you this is why you ought to, “for he is a god,” it’s sarcasm, really we would translate that, “really, he’s a god isn’t he?” Well, maybe he’s out for lunch, why don’t you call a little louder, maybe he’s taking a vacation, maybe he’s tired and taking a nap? So he’s mocking. And it goes on, they go into a nasty ritual of cutting themselves and it goes on all day so that finally nobody’s even paying attention, nothings happened.

Then he says alright, it’s my turn, in verses 32, 33, 34, 35, notice the elaborate precautions he takes to avoid any hint that this is a sleight of hand magic trick. He has the people help set up the experiment, go ahead, pour water over the whole thing, not one time but three times. He’s not trying to say I’m a better magician than the other guys. This is going to be genuine. So lest anybody say that this whole thing is just a joke, soak the thing in water. We’ve heard skeptics say what he did was he put oil and petroleum in the water and then he dropped a hot brand into it. No matter what you do somebody always has some cute way of getting around the truth of the word of God.

Verse 36, “Then it came about at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice,” so he’s had hours, this whole process of pouring water started mid afternoon at the very latest. We’re talking three or four hours of soaking in this water before this whole thing starts. And dramatically he’s waiting for the sun to start setting to lower the skylight down so when God answers with fire it’s going to be very clear He’s doing it. We said there’s two tests for a false prophet, not one, two. Test number two was that the miracle would come to pass. Test number one is doctrinal consistency. What do you notice him doing in verse 36? Notice the basis of his prayer and things he omits from the prayer

This is one of the great prayers of Scripture. “It came about at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, “O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel” or Jacob, stop there, with that title, what does he have in his head? One of the great covenants, the Abrahamic Covenant. Notice what he has omitted here? In this prayer of verse 36 he doesn’t mention the Mosaic Covenant; he could have, that explained the drought and the whole discipline cycle they were under. But why do you suppose he dwells, in an hour of crisis, not on the Mosaic

Covenant but on the prior Abrahamic Covenant? What did that covenant guarantee that the Mosaic Law never could? The survival of the nation; remember the land, seed and blessing? So that's the election covenant, that's the grace covenant. So here he is appealing to the God of grace to be gracious to the nation and protect their survival as a historical entity. The survival of the nation in history does not depend upon God's word to Moses but God's word to Abraham. That's why Paul in the NT, when he starts talking about Abraham in Romans, talking about justification and how that doesn't come through the Law. People act like Paul made this up, or that nobody understood this before the Damascus road. That's false. If you read the OT it's clear that these prophets themselves knew. It wasn't the Law that justified you. You had to have a personal relationship with the God of the law through faith. And the code word when you see that is "circumcised heart." That's an OT term that corresponds in the NT to our term regeneration. They had something parallel to what we call regeneration; they called it circumcision of the heart, spiritual surgery that the Holy Spirit did to believers in the OT. These people had to trust in the Lord just like you and I.

So in this prayer he comes back to the theology of the first five books of the Bible and particularly the theology of Genesis. "O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, today let it be known," is he orthodox in theology? Does he meet the criteria of test number one? Absolutely. Now he says, "today let it be known that You are God in Israel" in other words, God has called this nation into existence, and there's a Great King above all the little human kings, so he's arguing that God, you are the King here, show yourself. "...and that I am Your servant and I have done all these things at Your word. Verse 37, "Answer me, O LORD, answer me," and notice again verse 37 the motive for the answer, it isn't that you may glorify me and I can be a great prophet and I get lots of media attention. That's not the motive here. He says "answer me that this people may know that You, O LORD, are God, and *that* You have turned their heart back again." Isn't that interesting? Look at that last phrase, he's basically praying for a revival in the nation. But notice what must precede revival taking place? The revival stems from a recognition of who God is. Revival doesn't come just because people all of a sudden get a warm feeling in their heart. All true revivals in Scripture begin because people begin to view God correctly, and it behooves us to remember this. When we go back to who and what God is, we said SRJLOOOIE, that's our acronym for the attributes of God. God is sovereign, Baal is not sovereign,

Baal is nature forces. How do we know Baal isn't sovereign? They've been talking to him for hours and nothing has happened. So either he's deaf, he's not there, in which case he's not omnipresent, or he's asleep in which case he's not omnipotent. So Elijah's prayer is really reminding the people of the attributes God has. He's sovereign, righteous, just, loving, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, immutable, eternal. That's who God is. Baal isn't those things. He's taking a nap somewhere. And what he's arguing for is a correction of their view of God, that brings revival, not what people are feeling, whether people are doing this or that religious motion, rolling down the aisle, raising their hand, all this is just human response and it can take a variety of forms based on individual personalities. But what brings about revival is clear perception of who our God is. And if that perception is clear then your perception of sin is clear. Remember with David, the issue wasn't the social consequences, those were there but that which brings conviction is a proper view of God and when we perceive that then we see all our sin and it can lead to confession and restoration. What's Elijah ultimately after? Confession of the nation. The whole nation is gathered. This demonstration is about to take place. O Lord, if you will show Yourself these people will see their sin and we can get national confession and a restoration of the nation. It may not last more than 50 years, or 15 years, but there could be a great revival here *if* You would just show Yourself. I'm standing up here alone, I've got 450 to 1 odds, and I'm trusting You to come through.

Verse 38, a good story always has a great ending, God comes through. Notice He comes in a big way, "Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." Verse 39, obviously the response, and people say "YHWH, He is God, YHWH, He is God." In verse 40, let's go back to our first point, these tests. What were these tests for? To convict the false prophet. What was the punishment for a false prophet? Capital punishment. What do you see being administered here? "Then Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape." So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there. <sup>41</sup>Now Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a *heavy* shower." <sup>42</sup>So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he crouched down on the earth and put his face between his knees. <sup>43</sup>He said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked and said, "There is nothing." And he said, "Go



back” seven times.” He’s walking up that mountain, looking out to the Mediterranean Sea. In v 44 here come the clouds, <sup>44</sup>It came about at the seventh *time*, that he said, “Behold, a cloud as small as a man’s hand is coming up from the sea.” And he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare *your chariot* and go down, so that the *heavy* shower does not stop you.’” <sup>45</sup>In a little while the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.” So, the drought has lifted, why did we say? Because the nation repented and when the nation repented the cycle of discipline would be lifted. Then this amazing thing in verse 46, “Then the hand of the LORD was on Elijah, and he girded up his loins and outran Ahab to Jezreel.” Twenty three plus miles! That’s one of the two incidents we want to see as YHWH demonstrates His authority over Baal.

Alright, what did the incident of Carmel do? It blasted the apostasy right at its very core by assaulting the nature of the idol. He took it on, he didn’t waste time on side issues. The issue was who is God? Who do you worship? Where’s your ultimate commitment? Is it the word of God or the word of men? That’s the issue, and that’s the issue he called the people back to.

Now, I’m only going to show one more in this cycle of Elijah, 1 Kgs 21, because there’s another consequence of false religion and false prophecy. Whenever you have the word of God demeaned, put aside, and not taken seriously, it creates a vacuum, and into that vacuum will come the word of man and the authority of man. Inevitably in history when the word of God gets weak the state becomes strong, in the bad sense. The state becomes a super power, because God isn’t there, the word of God isn’t there, now the state becomes the arbiter absolutely of what’s right and what’s wrong, knowledge of good and evil; the state becomes God walking on earth.

In 1 Kgs 21:2 we have an incident that shows that, “Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, “Give me your vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden because it is close beside my house, and I will give you a better vineyard than it in its place; if you like, I will give you the price of it in money.” That’s very analogous to something the state does today. If the state wants to run a highway through your backyard, they have a doctrine which says they can do that. Lawyers have called it eminent domain; that’s a doctrine that says the state is sovereign over all property and has the right to take it if it deems it necessary. So basically what it amounts to is no one has private property.

Usually it's not phrased quite so bluntly but that's essentially what it's saying.

And Ahab is the state incarnate, he wants Naboth's property. In verse 3 they've got a problem because in God's kingdom, unlike a pagan kingdom, property is not controlled ultimately by the state, property in the eminent domain clause attaches to who? Who gave Israel the land? God did. So who ultimately owns the land? God does. In the early chapters of Joshua and Judges, remember in Joshua we had those boring things about the tribe of Gad own from here to there, and they went from this city to that city... why do we have to go through all this stuff, can't we get into some good stuff? We said there was a reason for that. That was the real estate deeds of the families of those tribes, that God gave the land, as the owner of the land He gave the deed to that family. A powerful spiritual truth comes out of all this, so follow my reasoning.

The land was ultimately given by God to tribes, not to the king. What did He say in 1 Sam 8? If you get a king, he's going to take your land. There was no such thing as eminent domain inside the boundaries of the kingdom of God, because God has eminent domain. Verse 3, "But Naboth said to Ahab, 'The LORD forbid me that I should give you,'" and he uses a very precise word, God forbid "that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers." What's he arguing for is that the Law says I have title to the land because God said. This gives you a tremendous view, if you think about it, of the tremendous freedom that the kingdom of God gave people. God gave freedom like man has never seen. We have never, ever, including our own country, ever had absolute ownership of property like this. Never! We don't now and we never will. But here families possessed an eternal title to that land, no inheritance taxes, none of that because God gave it to them.

This is an interesting character study, he comes back and he pouts. Verse 4, "So Ahab came into his house sullen and vexed because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he said 'I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.' And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and ate no food." Poor Ahab, he's having a pity party here. And along came Jezebel, verse 5, "But Jezebel his wife came to him and said to him, 'How is it that your spirit is so sullen that you are not eating food?' " So he said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite," and he didn't give me

my toy. Verse 7, “And Jezebel his wife said to him, ‘Do you now reign over Israel? Arise, eat bread, and let your heart be joyful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.’” See who has the strength in this marriage? Jezebel called the shots here, and she argues, who’s the king here? Who rules? You do, really she did, but you get it. So here she is and in verses 8, 9, 10, she works with her attorneys. We’re going to pull a deal in the court system here, get this fixed. <sup>8</sup>“So she wrote letters in Ahab’s name and sealed them with his seal, and sent letters to the elders and to the nobles who were living with Naboth in his city. <sup>9</sup>Now she wrote in the letters, saying, “Proclaim a fast and seat Naboth at the head of the people; <sup>10</sup>and seat two worthless men before him, and let them testify against him, saying, ‘You cursed God and the king.’ Then take him out and stone him to death.” Very simple, you’ve got two witnesses, invoke such and such clause of the law and you’ve got it made. Legal shenanigans—here they are. It’s been going on for centuries. So she kills him. Now God has something to say about this, verse 16, “When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab arose to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it. <sup>17</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, <sup>18</sup>“Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth where he has gone down to take possession of it. <sup>19</sup>“You shall speak to him, saying, ‘Thus says the LORD, “Have you murdered and also taken possession?’” ’ Here’s the sentence of God on him. “And you shall speak to him, saying, “Thus says the LORD, “In the place where the dogs licked up the blood of Naboth the dogs will lick up your blood, even yours.” Elijah really had some great messages; these were fantastic sermons that were so extremely popular with people. Verse 21, “Behold, I will bring evil upon you, and will utterly sweep you away, and will cut off from Ahab every male, both bond and free in Israel; <sup>22</sup>and I will make your house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to anger, and *because* you have made Israel sin.” What is he saying? What does a king always want besides a kingdom? He wants a dynasty. So what does he mean when he says your house will be like the house of Jeroboam, like the house of Baasha? He’s saying you’re dynasty is finished. This is about dynasty number four in the northern kingdom. How many dynasties have they had in the southern kingdom? One. Why? What’s the covenant, the election, the sovereign covenant that controls the southern kingdom? The Davidic Covenant. There will always be a Davidic dynasty. But in the north where

there is no protective sovereign word from God, what's happening to the dynasties. One after another they drop like flies. Why? Because it's the word of God that controls history.

Notice also in the same text, verse 23, "And of Jezebel also has the LORD spoken, saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel in the district of Jezreel.'" Let's see how Ahab came to an end, turn to 1 Kgs 22:34. Right in the middle of a battle, Ahab's got a disguise on trying to avoid getting shot, and lo and behold, "Now a certain man drew his bow at random," notice the text, this is all accidental, (quote unquote), "and struck the king of Israel in a joint of the armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, 'Turn around and take me out of the fight; for I am severely wounded.'" <sup>35</sup>The battle raged that day, and the king was propped up in his chariot in front of the Arameans, and died at evening, and the blood from the wound ran into the bottom of the chariot. <sup>36</sup>Then a cry passed throughout the army close to sunset, saying, "Every man to his city and every man to his country." <sup>37</sup>So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried the king in Samaria." Verse 38, here's the fulfillment of the prophecy, <sup>38</sup>"They washed the chariot by the pool of Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood" and by the way, the whores bathed themselves there, "according to the word of the LORD which He spoke." So here's the prophecy of Elijah and it came to pass because he's a genuine prophet.

He also made a prophecy about Jezebel; in 2 Kgs 9:30 we see what happened to that prophecy. After Ahab another man ascends the throne who is God's clean-up man in the north for a while, his name is Jehu. "<sup>30</sup>When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it, and she painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out the window. <sup>31</sup>As Jehu entered the gate, she said, 'Is it well, Zimri, your master's murderer?' <sup>32</sup>Then he lifted up his face to the window and said, 'Who is on my side? Who?' And two or three officials looked down at him. <sup>33</sup>He said, 'Throw her down.' So they threw her down, and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall and on the horses, and he trampled her under foot. <sup>34</sup>When he came in, he ate and drank; and he said, 'See now to this cursed woman and bury her, for she is a king's daughter.' <sup>35</sup>They went to bury her, but they found nothing more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. <sup>36</sup>Therefore they returned and told him. And he said, 'This is the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the

Tishbite, saying, 'In the property of Jezreel the dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel;' Needless to say God took care of that little problem in His kingdom.

Two nasty deaths. Remember when you see these vivid descriptions of someone nasty die, and you think, oh, that's gross, why do you keep that for us in the pages of Your word? What's God saying? He's saying I reign and you may not think I'm doing much about evil now but boom, I did this to so and so and I did that to so and so. It's a sovereign declaration that I will take care of the evil problem. We'll conclude with this note because we're going to get into the doctrinal distillation from this section which is in the arena of sanctification which is basically the process of separating good and evil. This problem, which began at the Fall and is finally resolved by God in the New Creation is intimately connected with the doctrine of spiritual growth. To show this I want to quote from a book called *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, it's a great book, many say the greatest ever written on the kingdom of God. It was authored by a very fine scholar by the name of Alva McClain who taught for years at Grace Theological Seminary.

What he's talking about here is this; people argue there is no God that's holy and good in history because the evil people get away with evil and the good people don't get blessed. That's the background for his comment. Watch how he approaches this, talking about Israel in particular, not the United States, not England, not Rome, just Israel and the Mosaic Law Code, Deut 28 blessing and cursing plus Lev 26, blessing and cursing. "This principle [of man's well-being conditioned by obedience or disobedience to God] holds good generally, in all nations in every age. But its operation has often been obscured to human eyes by the time 'lag' between the moral breach and the infliction of the sanction. While it is always true that the nation which has 'sown the wind' shall also certainly 'reap the whirlwind' (Hosea 8:7), the harvest is generally and mercifully long delayed (2 Pet. 3:9); and for this very reason men often fail to see the causal connection. Furthermore, in the general history of nations, the divine penalties are inflicted through secondary causes behind the veil of providential control (Jer. 51:28-30)." It's masked. "For these reasons the skeptical have been able to question the existence of any divinely ordained moral government in human history; the Lord's own people at times have been greatly troubled and perplexed by the problem (Hab. 1:1-4). But in the case of the nation Israel in her Mediatorial Kingdom of history," which is his term for Israel between Moses in 1400 BC

to the Exile in 586 BC, “But in the case of the nation Israel in her Mediatorial Kingdom of history, the moral government of Jehovah was not only declared at Sinai but also was confirmed spectacularly in the recorded history of that kingdom by means of divine sanctions immediately imposed.” Note that, immediately imposed. No time lags; that’s the difference between the dispensation of Israel and God’s handling of nations today. God doesn’t work that way today, but He did here, it was tight governance, now it’s looser. “And these sanctions were generally supernatural; either by the withdrawal of the promised supernatural protection from the ordinary hazards of human life in a fallen world, or by the positive infliction of supernatural punishment.... This close and immediate connection between the well-being of the chosen nation and their moral and spiritual attitude is most clearly summarized in Deuteronomy (cf. chapters 28-30.)”

So that’s what we’re looking at in this history. God is chastening, He’s disciplining within the household of faith; within His nation through the prophets. Why? Because He’s chosen that nation to be a nation where He demonstrates the separation of good and evil and how that’s a painful, painful process. So we’ll get set for the doctrine next week.

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