

# Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, February 23, 2022 – First Baptist Church Buda  
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



**“Kneeling on the Promises”**  
***1 Kings 18:41-46***

*<sup>41</sup> Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain.” <sup>42</sup> So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, <sup>43</sup> and said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” So he went up and looked, and said, “There is nothing.” And seven times he said, “Go again.” <sup>44</sup> Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, “There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea!” So he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, “Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.” ’ <sup>45</sup> Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. <sup>46</sup> Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. -1 King 18:41-46 (NKJV)*

While many people like to stick with the New Testament when it comes to reading the Bible, I must confess that the Old Testament has a special place in my heart. I love reading the testimonies of faith heroes like Abraham, Moses, David, Esther, Joseph and more. Their lives are so inspiring and if we're honest, filled with enough drama and conflict to keep me on the edge of my seat. One of my all-time favorite testimonies in the Bible is that of the Prophet Elijah, that we have been looking at the last few weeks as we began our study on his life.

This man was on fire for God. Literally at his request the Lord answered with a consuming fire from heaven (1 Kings 18:36-38). Elijah was sent on mission from God to turn the Israelites hearts back to their One True God. When we first read of Elijah, the Israelites have been worshiping both the God of their ancestors, who is the One True Living God, and the false God Baal. Enough was enough. God sent Elijah to confront their wavering faith and lead them to make a decision.

## **7 Things You May Not Know About Elijah in the Bible:**

**(1) God uses the ordinary, like Elijah, to do the extraordinary - James 5:17-18** reminded us that he was an ordinary man just like us. *“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he*

*prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.” - James 5:17-18ESV*

Elijah, a biblical prophet is one of the most interesting characters in the Bible. His life was colorful. God used him during a really important time in Israel's history to oppose a wicked king and to bring revival to those people. Like many other characters in the Bible, Elijah's life was not without its challenges. His life was filled with turmoil. There were times when he was decisive and valiant, but there were also times when he was fearful and uncertain. He also demonstrated victory and defeat, trailed by recovery. He recognized the power of God, but he also knew the pits of depression. His life was devoted to the work of restoring true worship in Israel. Ultimately, Elijah urged the people of ancient Israel to turn from sin and to return to the true God and his message is just as important for us today. Elijah's admonition that God's people faithfully serve Him with their whole heart is just as relevant now as it was during his time on earth.

- (2) **Elijah Was Chosen By God** - God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. Similar to many of the prophets of the Bible, Elijah didn't seek to be one of God's messengers. Instead, God chose him directly for the position. When he was called, Elijah didn't hesitate to take on his mission, even though it appeared his life would be threatened by the wicked king. Elijah set out at once for the capital city of Samaria to deliver the announcement to King Ahab. Then God sent Elijah into hiding as the drought dried up the streams and withered the crops of the nation (1 Kings 17:7-15; 1 Kings 18:1). Elijah was chosen to confront the followers of Baal simply because he had a relationship with God. In addition to confronting the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, he also performed many miracles: providing an endless supply of flour for a widow and raising a young boy from the dead.
- (3) **We Don't Know a Lot About His Past** - Elijah's name means "my God is the Lord." He came from Tishbeh in Gilead, but little is known of his family or birth. While many prophets of the Bible are introduced with information about family lineage, this wasn't the case with Elijah. This shows that his selection by God was divine. He came out of nowhere to do the extraordinary at time when he was so desperately needed. Only God can do that. While we don't know a great deal about his life, we do know a lot about his nature and character. Elijah was attentive to God's voice and walking in obedience to His Word. Through this, Elijah found encouragement, reward and victory. Like any human, he struggled with his own frailties, but he was still used mightily by God. Our Heavenly Father uses us for those same purposes.
- (4) **Prayer Was His Key Strategy** - Elijah prayed to God vehemently. His prayers were bold and he called on God to do the miraculous. His requests weren't small – He prayed for a drought in the land, prayed to raise the widow's son from the dead and called down a fire from heaven to consume the offering on Mount Carmel. The Bible tells us, "At the usual time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, 'O Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am Your servant. Prove that I have done all that is at your command. Immediately the fire of the Lord flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the trench!' (1 Kings 18:36,38). We see through Elijah's life that prayer is truly powerful. His life reminds us that if we trust in God through prayer, it will make a significant impact.
- (5) **He Suffered With Depression** - Depression is often triggered by life circumstances and can really pull you into the pit. There are numerous biblical references to depression. Scripture describes the struggles of people who suffered with depression even though they were faithful servants of God. These men did not suffer primarily because they were sinners. They suffered because they were human and were susceptible to severe pressures. Elijah grew depressed when he was rebuked while he was anticipating a moment of triumph. His lofty hopes were

crushed; he became sick at heart. Up until this point, Elijah had been the epitome of spiritual courage. He now collapses, runs away when Israel most needs his leadership, possibly missing the chance for national repentance and turns suicidal. He suffered from spiritual depression – a specific kind of depression that is related to commitment to God. Elijah’s depression, along with many other biblical characters, alerts us to the fact that being committed to God does not necessarily exempt us from being depressed.

- (6) **His Life Was Threatened** - When the false prophets of Baal were dead, Elijah’s life was threatened by Jezebel, the wicked wife of King Ahab. As Israel’s queen, she brought the worship of her god Baal, influencing King Ahab to worship Baal and set up idols in Israel (1 Kings 16:31; 1 Kings 21:25-26). God’s prophets who bring messages of warning are often hated and accused of being the cause of such suffering. Jezebel and the false prophets of Baal hated Elijah and they did everything in their power to catch him. In a moment of human weakness, Elijah was deeply discouraged. But it wasn’t long before God reassured Elijah and sent him back to face King Ahab. Elijah was sent to deliver the message that Ahab and Jezebel would both die a humiliating death because of all the wicked deeds they refused to repent of (1 Kings 21:20-24).
- (7) **John the Baptist’s Ministry Was Marked By ‘The Spirit and Power of Elijah’** - We can learn about the message of the final Elijah by studying the mission of John the Baptist. Gabriel brought a message from God that a prophet was coming to announce that Jesus was the Christ, the long-awaited Messiah. John the Baptist was the prophet, and Jesus declared that John was an Elijah-like figure, in addition to one who would come later (Matthew 11:14; Matthew 17:12). An angel declared of John’s mission: “And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him [Jesus] in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:16-17). Ultimately, John the Baptist’s ministry was marked by “the spirit and power of Elijah” fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi 4:5-6. James uses Elijah as an example of prayer in James 5:17-18. He says that Elijah “was a human being, even as we are: yet he prayed that it wouldn’t rain and it didn’t. Then he prayed that it would rain and it did. We see through this that the power of prayer is in God, not within our human nature.

Many people think that the prophets were morally or spiritually superior to us, and it’s easy to think of Elijah in this way. But the truth is, he wasn’t. Like us, Elijah needed correction, encouragement and the knowledge that other believers were standing against Baal too. Elijah wasn’t exceptionally spiritual or superior. He was completely human. But what made Elijah extraordinary was his complete commitment to the Will of God. Elijah gave all his energy and heart so that the world would know the one true God. God uses the ordinary to do the extraordinary.



God had told His servant Elijah, “God... hide yourself” once he had delivered the message of a national drought to King Ahab (1 Kings 17:1-3). He obeyed. Over three years later, God told the same man, “Go, show yourself,” and promised that He would send rain on the earth (1 Kings 18:1). This was a stated, specific promise that Elijah claimed, which gave him power in prayer. In this study we will learn some specific things about God’s promises and how they apply to us when we pray.

## GOD’S PROMISES TO US

There are a couple of important considerations concerning the promises of God to us as found in His Word. These two important considerations do affect us both believers and unbelievers (all people), in some ways.

### 2 Important Consideration Concerning the Promises of God:

1. **How many promises of God are there in the Bible? – 7,000 to 8,000** Throughout the history of the church and Christendom multiple sources have set out to determine how many promises of God are in the Bible. How many are there? One source came up with as many as 8,000, another source came up with 7,000. The true number may be somewhere between these two large figures... perhaps higher. One diligent source gives us a more exact number of the promises of God found in Scripture at 7,474. Perhaps that number is close to being correct. The most important thing to remember concerning the number of promises of God is not the exact number but what Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, tells us concerning this number in 2 Corinthians 1:20, **“<sup>20</sup> For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.” – 2 Corinthians 1:20** How ever many promises there are in the Bible, they are all “yes” in Him. Everyone of them! **A Helpful Resource:** There is a classic little book that has sold millions of copies that has been around for a while, called

**“The Bible Promise Book.”** This little book contains over 1,000 of the promises found in the Bible arranged alphabetically by subject. I find this helpful when you are looking for a promise pertaining to a particular area, or a particular concern you are dealing with.

2. **What kinds of promises of God are these in the Bible? – 4 different types** Not all of those promises, however, are for everyone. There are four different kinds of promises found in the Bible... in Scripture. Every promise and its potential application should be considered. Here are the four kinds of promises you may find in Scripture.

#### **4 Types of Promises Found in the Scripture:**

- (1) **Personal Promises** – A personal promise is a promise given to a certain biblical character or group in a particular situation, so that the promise is without application apart from its historical contacts.
- (2) **Universal Promises** – A universal promise is unlimited in scope, applying to everyone.
- (3) **Conditional Promises** – Conditional promises are those which will remain unfulfilled unless make keeps his part of the promise. These promises are contingent on obedience to the provisional part of the promise, and will usually be qualified with a “if... then” clause or the like (“if you will do this, then I will do this”).
- (4) **Unconditional Promises** – An unconditional promise is fulfilled regardless of what man does.

**What kind of promise?:** *How well can you recognize the promises found in God’s Word. Below is a chart of the four different types of promises found in the Bible. Listen as each verse is read and see if you can identify what time of promise it is by placing the scripture reference in the appropriate column.*

<b>PERSONAL PROMISES</b>	<b>UNIVERSAL PROMISES</b>	<b>CONTITIONAL PROMISES</b>	<b>UNCONDITIONAL PROMISES</b>
Joshua 6:5 Mark 16:18	John 3:16 Acts 16:31	Matthew 21:22 1 John 1:9	Matthew 11:29-30 Hebrews 13:8

#### **Personal Promises:**

1. Joshua 6:5 – *“<sup>5</sup> It shall come to pass, when they make a long blast with the ram’s horn, and when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him.”*
2. Mark 16:18 – *“<sup>18</sup> They will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”*

#### **Universal Promises:**

1. John 3:16 – *“<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*
2. Acts 16:31 - <sup>31</sup> *So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.”*

#### **Conditional Promises:**

1. Matthew 21:22 – *“<sup>22</sup> And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”*

2. 1 John 1:9 – *“<sup>9</sup> If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

### Unconditional Promises:

1. Matthew 11:29-30 – *“<sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*
2. Hebrews 13:8 – *“<sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.”*

### GOD’S PROMISES TO ELIJAH (1 Kings 18:1, 41-46)

*“<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.” – Kings 18:1 (NKJV)*

*<sup>41</sup> Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain.” <sup>42</sup> So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, <sup>43</sup> and said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” So he went up and looked, and said, “There is nothing.” And seven times he said, “Go again.” <sup>44</sup> Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, “There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea!” So he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, “Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.”’ <sup>45</sup> Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. <sup>46</sup> Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. -1 King 18:41-46 (NKJV)*

These passages reveals God’s promise to Elijah, it is both personal and conditional... let’s look at the three parts to this promise.

### 3 Parts to God’s Promise to Elijah: (in 1 Kings 18:1 & 41-46)

1. **The Promise Declared (1 Kings 18:1)** – *“<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.” The condition... Elijah’s part... was expressed in the words, “Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send I will send rain on the earth.” A good question... “Would it have not rained and the drought not ceased had Elijah not done his part in going to Ahab?” I don’t think so! This whole episode was God showing Himself to be the true God of Israel to Ahab, his false religion and false priests, and the people of God. Note the personal nature of the promise... “the word of the Lord came to Elijah...” Elijah responded by informing Ahab in verse 41 that “...there is the sound of abundance of rain.”*
2. **The Promise Claimed (1 Kings 18:42-44)** – *<sup>42</sup> So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, <sup>43</sup> and said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” So he went up and looked, and said, “There is nothing.” And seven times he said, “Go again.” <sup>44</sup> Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, “There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea!” So he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, “Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.”’ ” Notice that Elijah parted Ahab’s company to go to the top of Mt. Carmel. It appears that as he went to wait for the fulfillment of God’s promise, he went in a spirit of deep, intense prayer. The description contained in verse 42 indicates this, <sup>42</sup> So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees. This particular posture was viewed by one Old Testament scholar (C.F. Kell) as “probably the attitude of deep absorption in God...” Five aspect which relate to this time of prayer, associated with claiming of the promise should be noted.*



### **5 Aspects of Elijah's Earnest and Fervent Prayer:**

- (1) **Separation** (v.42a) – *“<sup>42</sup> So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel...”* Elijah withdrew himself to a place of quietness and solitude, apparently accompanied only by his servant.
- (2) **Humility** (v.42b) – *“...then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees.”* Putting aside any pride, arrogance, and even self-assurance, he physically assumed a posture which spoke of submission and a low estate.
- (3) **Confidence** (v.43a) – *“<sup>43</sup> And (Elijah) said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.”* So sure that the promise of rain was soon to be fulfilled, he sent his servant off to look toward the sea for clouds.
- (4) **Persistence** (v.43b) – *“...So he went up and looked, and said, “There is nothing.” And seven times he said, “Go again.”* Notice the servant returned, reporting, “There is nothing.” Sure that God's word would be made good, Elijah sent his servant back seven times. The prophet's trust was not hampered by this period of waiting.
- (5) **Expectation** (v.44) - *“<sup>44</sup> Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, “There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!” So he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, “Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.””* As soon as a single cloud appeared above the sea (the size of a man's hand), Elijah instructed Ahab to leave immediately for Jezreel, a city approximately 18-20 miles away. He was concerned that the heavy shower would hinder the king's travel.

**Summary:** There are principles we can learn from this occasion in Elijah's life that apply to our lives. These principles will have a strengthening influence on our times spent alone with God... on our personal prayer life.

### **5 Prayer Strengthening Principles for Believers Today:**

- (1) It is necessary that we be in the **right place** for focused prayer, where are free from distractions... **separation** -
  - (2) We should not tolerate in our life any shallow **familiarity** or **presumption** with God when we pray... **humility** -
  - (3) Every attempt should be made to address God in prayer with **specific concerns**... **confidence** – Nothing is too small or insignificant to bring before God. If it concerns you it concern Him
  - (4) When we have to wait, we must resist every urge to **give-up** or **retreat**... **persistence** – We give up too soon!
  - (5) Preserving a positive and hopeful attitude in God's ability to work is necessary, not optional. Pray in faith, believing!... **expectance** – Noted Christian author, and speaking, Barbara Johnson said, *“If your gonna pray for rain, take your umbrella”*
3. **The Promise Fulfilled** (1 Kings 18:45-56) - *“<sup>45</sup> Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. <sup>46</sup> Then the hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he girded up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.”* The sky darkened, the wind whipped up, and a heavy shower began falling. What God promised was not taking place. The hand of the Lord was on Elijah.

### **GOD'S PROMISES TODAY (James 5:17-18)**

*<sup>17</sup> Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. <sup>18</sup> And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit. -James 5:17-18 (NKJV)*

Though Elijah was a notable figure in Scripture, it must be remembered that he was not different from us... he had a nature just like ours (v.17). His effectiveness was couched, however, in his prayer life. His earnest, fervent prayer resulted in both the stoppage and resumption of rain (v.18). They were prayers characterized by “earnestness.” Let’s close with these simple two observations about prayers and promises...

## **2 Important Observations about Prayers and Promises:**

1. **Prayer is exciting, but not necessarily glamorous** – In other words, it’s easy talk about prayer, study prayer, even give lip service to prayer... but hard to practice, a hard disciple to really do and do well, with fully commitment and really do it. ***Knowing the power and important of prayer, why don’t we pray with more fervency and commitment?***
2. **Promises are available, but not necessarily automatic** – God will do His part and will always (always) be true to His promises, but we must do ours first.