1Thess #129

Prayer is answered in God’s time according to HIS plan.

As a reminder I will be taking time off this weekend, in fact this will be the only message this week.

I will be back next Tuesday September 5th – we will do the Lord’s Supper and be back on track then.

Keep in mind we have a generous offer for plane tickets and hotel fees for a couple who may be struggle with finances to get to the November Bible Conference.

Go to prbministy.org and shoot me an email and we may be able to help you out!

Open up today in 1Kings chapter 18 and we will finish this series on prayer with a familiar story in the OT.

Many of you know the background on the story of Jezebel and Elijah, but I will give a quick overview for the sake of those who do not know the story.

King Ahab was the 7th king in the line of Israel and more specifically a ruler over the Northern Tribe of Israel.

King Ahab married Jezebel and allowed her influence and wicked power to cloak the nation of Israel.

Jezebel was the daughterof the priest-king Ethbaal, ruler of the coastal Phoenician cities (modern Lebanon) of Tyre and Sidon. This culture was steeped in BAAL worship and deeply entrenched in dark arts and deviant, sexual practices.

She was a leader under the Phallic Cult of BAAL in which she was a high priestess.

I taught a short series on the Jezebel spirit years ago.

It is demonic influences in the sexual realm, pertaining to a woman who indulges in manipulation or dominance and sexual enticement and adultery as well.

Our culture is saturated with the Jezebel spirit and much of it is masked as sexual freedom for women and a progressive form of women’s liberation.

It is all a huge satanic lie.

Jezebel’s culture was wrapped up in witchcraft and worship of the BAAL system with many dark practices.

Now Jezebel controlled the kingdom and Ahab was more or less under her authority.

/The OT prophets like Elijah were faced with the daunting task of facing a whole society of evil and rebellion toward GOD. They often felt alone and they had flaws and weakness like all of us, yet they had to stand strong in their calling. Having BD saturated in their soul and deep communication with GOD through prayer and worship kept them in forward motion. \

In chapter 18 – there had been a drought and the prophet Elijah was told to lay low for a period of time. Now he is called out to reemerge in the Northern Tribe and represent the one true GOD.

/1Ki 18:20 So Ahab sent *orders* among all the sons of Israel and **brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel**.

Jezebel had 450 false prophets they dabbled in dark arts and had demonic powers.\

Interestingly enough, is that the Northern Tribe of Israel had fallen so far away from truth that they accepted not just counterfeits, but demonic influence over their nation.

/[1Ki 18:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/21/s_309021) Then Elijah approached all the people and said, **“How long are you going to struggle with the two choices**? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people did not answer him *so much as* a word.

This is a larger issue even today, within the population of self-proclaimed Christians who choose the ways of the world over the word of God.\

This is the exact principle I speak on all the time – get off the fence!

False teachers, lies and counterfeits of religion and legalism are everywhere. Now more than ever, rampant sexual immortality allowed even in the churches and the arena of spirituality.

Hard to believe but back then with Jezebel at the throne it was probably just as bad or worse in some cases.

[1Ki 18:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/22/s_309022) Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left as a prophet of the LORD, while Baal’s prophets are 450 men.

/Elijah was not alone, GOD had thousands of other leaders and prophets. If we do not step-up GOD will use another Bel. It is our privilege to take our place inside the plan of GOD even when we feel alone or outnumbered – GOD is in control! The call for BD resident in the soul, prayer and communication leading to deep intimacy with the LORD will give you the confidence to stand alone. \

[1Ki 18:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/23/s_309023) “Now have them give us two oxen; and have them choose the 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.*

Elijah knew they could pray to their false gods and there was no match next to the power of the true GOD.

/[1Ki 18:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/24/s_309024) “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 replied, “That is a good idea.”

Spiritual mature Bels who know they reside inside the plan of GOD can be confident in prayer! \

The confidence is that in HIS way and HIS timing - GOD will show HIMSELF in magnificent fashion.

God may even do something subtle, that you did not expect and it opens a floodgate down the road to something incredible.

 REPEAT

[1Ki 18:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/25/s_309025) So Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, “Choose the one ox for yourselves and prepare it first, since *there are* many *of* you, and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under the ox.*”

/God the HS was active upon Elijah and because he was willing to step forward during this time, he knew how to handle this situation. His prayer life and BD intake was strong, therefore this situation did not overwhelm him! He took control and stood in the face of evil as a true man of GOD.\

[1Ki 18:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/26/s_309026) Then they took the ox which was given them and they prepared it, and they 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 limped about the altar which they had made.

/[1Ki 18:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/27/s_309027) And at **noon Elijah ridiculed them** and said, “Call out with a loud voice, since he is a god; undoubtedly he is **attending to business**, or is **on the way**, or is **on a journey. Perhaps he is asleep, and will awaken**.”

The original Hebrew uses a term for stepping away or on the way, sometimes used for a visit to the bathroom - *śîḡ.\*

The original context is very rich with divine sarcasm. *Has your god gone off to the bathroom – is he sleeping, maybe he is out of the office for the day!!??*

[1Ki 18:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/28/s_309028) So they cried out with a loud voice, and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until blood gushed out on them.

Because the sexual cult of the culture of Jezebel was very perverse – it also approved of human sacrifice and physical harm within its worship system.

In fact – sexual perversion if left unchecked, leads to more perversion and more bizarre behaviors and rituals. The deeper a person goes into sexual perversion and criminal behaviors the deeper they get locked into very dangerous and sick behaviors!

It is a powerful form of demonic possession that leads to serial killers, rape, incest, pedophilia – violence inside and outside the bedroom.

 REPEAT

[1Ki 18:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/29/s_309029) When midday was past, they raved until the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.

[1Ki 18:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/30/s_309030) Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come forward to me.” So all the people came forward to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD which had been torn down.

/[1Ki 18:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/31/s_309031) Then **Elijah took twelve** **stones**, corresponding to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom **the word of the LORD had come, saying, “Israel shall be your name**.”

There was a protocol and respect that Elijah displayed, that showed the power of HIS God is the source not human effort or human sacrifice.\

[1Ki 18:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/32/s_309032) And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed.

NOTICE – the name of the LORD – YEHOVAH is who Elijah gave credit to and ask for power from.

[1Ki 18:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/33/s_309033) Then he laid out the wood, and he cut the ox in pieces and placed *it* on the wood.

Now watch the confidence in Elijah because his communication with GOD was so strong.

[1Ki 18:34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/34/s_309034) And he said, “Fill four large jars with water and pour *it* on the burnt offering and on the wood.” And he said, “Do it a second time,” so they did it a second time. Then he said, “Do it a third time,” so they did it a third time.

Four is a Biblical number often representing God’s power of creation.

Three stands for the perfection of the divine Trinity.

This would also squash any doubt that Elijah would do any trickery like the magicians and false prophets did with a man-made fluid called naphtha – which is a blend of crude oil, coal and other minerals. Very flammable!

[1Ki 18:35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/35/s_309035) The water flowed around the altar, and he also filled the trench with water.

Elijah’s prayer would now be a main focus on this public event.

[/1Ki 18:36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/36/s_309036) Then at the time of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, **Elijah the prophet approached and said, “LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel**, today let it be known that **You are God in Israel and that I am Your servant**, and *that* I have done all these things at **Your word**.

This is a clear prayer toward the only GOD! Elijah makes it abundantly clear that God’s word and HIS power are the focus not his human effort.\

[1Ki 18:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/37/s_309037) “Answer me, LORD, answer me, so that this people may know that You, LORD, are God, and *that* You have turned their heart back.”

[/1Ki 18:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/38/s_309038) **Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering** and the wood, and the stones and the dust; and **it licked up the water that was in the trench**.

When a Bel is going into maturity and they are in a serious, life altering event, GOD will display HIS power in answering prayer above and beyond what we can think of. \

[1Ki 18:39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/39/s_309039) When all the people saw *this,* they fell on their faces; and they said, “The LORD, He is God; the LORD, He is God!”

[1Ki 18:40](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/40/s_309040) 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 slaughtered them there.

This is a great example of how you have to deal with evil – there is no turning the other cheek especially when the evil or corruption has been warned repeatedly.

[1Ki 18:41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/41/s_309041) Now Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a *heavy* shower.”

[/1Ki 18:42](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/42/s_309042) So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But **Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he bent down** to the earth and **put his face between his knees**.

Elijah knew that he needed to remain humble and request what GOD needed to do next – not what he wanted! \

There is a powerful spirit of humility and gratitude in this scripture especially after what just happened.

[/1Ki 18:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/43/s_309043) And he said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” So he went up and looked, but he said, “There is nothing.” **Yet *Elijah* said, “Go back” seven times.**

God works on HIS timing and we have to be sensitive to God the HS and the word working in our life. \

Seven being a number of completion or God’s divine perfect work.

[1Ki 18:44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/44/s_309044) And *when he returned* the seventh *time,* he said, “Behold, a cloud as small as a person’s hand is coming up from the sea.” And *Elijah* said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Harness *your chariot horses* and go down, so that the *heavy* shower does not stop you.’”

Elijah was confident that GOD was about to work in a mighty fashion. His faith was at a peak.

[1Ki 18:45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/45/s_309045) Meanwhile the sky became dark with clouds and wind *came up,* and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.

[/1Ki 18:46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1ki/18/46/s_309046) Then **the hand of the LORD was on Elijah**, and he belted *his cloak* around his waist and **outran Ahab to Jezreel.**

Ahab rode horse-back, – Eljiah ran by the power of God.\

The Hebrew verb – ROOST, means to be very quick, speed and excessive perfect timing.

/No matter what dispensation God has foundational principles that sustain mankind and carry throughout the full plan of GOD until the 2nd Advent. A mature Bel willing to give themselves over to the plan of GOD, placing God’s plan and other people above their own selfish needs will find a very effective prayer life. \