

## **ELIJAH, MAN OF PRAYER**

Our lesson text comes from the context of (Jas.5:13-18). When you read this context, you discover the word prayer is used eight times in the English Bible (vs.13, 14, 15, 16 (2x), in vs.17 (2x), and in vs.18).

Three different Greek words were used by James.

- Proseuchomai Used 6 times prayer
- Euche was used once (Jas.5:15) prayer of faith
- Deesis was used once (Jas.5:16a) effective prayer of righteous man

Thus, prayer is the key doctrine of James 5:13-18. James picked Elijah as the man of prayer to make his doctrinal point. Then James picked one story out of many to exemplify **Elijah, Man of Prayer (1 Kings 17:1; 18:1-2, 17-20, 41-46) (read)**.

**This lesson will study five aspects of why James picked Elijah as the man of prayer of his lesson.**

### **1. Like James, Elijah was preaching to an apostate priest-nation of Israel under the five cycles of Divine Discipline (Deut. 28; Lev.26).**

This apostasy went from top to bottom in the north kingdom. It went from King Ahab to the Baal religion of the Phallic Cult, to the citizens, and to the reversionistic believers.

(1 Kings 16:30) “Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord more than all who were before him.”

As the prophet to Israel and to the king, Elijah was sent by God with a message for Ahab that **starts our lesson:**

(1Kings 17:1) “Now Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab, ‘As the Lord, the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, surely there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.”

### **2. Elijah’s prayer targeted the life blood of the priest-nation’s economy and livelihood – agriculture.**

Because of **Elijah’s prayer**, God shut down the entire economy of Israel for 3 ½ years by a severe life and death famine, much like the one in time of Joseph. The widow of Zarephath shows how severe this famine was in the land (1 Kings17:8-16/ Luke 4:25-26).

James describes it as - “Effective Prayer of a righteous man can accomplish MUCH (Jas.5:16b).”

**Who is in control of the earth’s environment?** This lesson will give the answer.

### **3. The sovereignty of God stopped the creative order of the Third Day of Creation in a specific area of land on planet earth for 3 ½ years (Gen.1:11-13; Jas.5:17).**

God did it again during the time of Joseph for 7 years; and it also produced life and death famine conditions (Gen.47:13).

Let's look at the importance of the Third Day of Creation:

(Gen.2:5-6) “Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, **for** the Lord God had not yet sent **rain** upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. But a **mist** used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.” (1 Kings 17:1) (neither dew nor rain)

James picked Elijah because he was a “man with a nature (homoioopathes) like us (Jas.5:17a).” Maybe the only difference between Elijah and us, is that he learned how to pray and hit the target every time!

(Jas.5:16b) “The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish **much**.” (1 John 5:14-15)

**4. Elijah's prayer was directed against his national economy to awaken them spiritually to their apostasy and evil and to turn their hearts back to the Lord (Jonah 3:8; 2 Kings 17:12-18) (idolatry).**

It was to awaken the northern kingdom and to avoid the coming the 2nd of 5 cycles of Divine Discipline upon priest-nation of Israel (Deut.28:22-24; Lev.26:18-20) (atmosphere bronze and earth iron).

Elijah wanted them to learn that the national crisis was not the famine, but national apostasy and evil. He wanted them to learn that the famine was good, and the evil was bad.

When the 3 ½ years of famine was over, Elijah told Ahab that God was removing the discipline by sending rain (1 Kings 18:1) (showers of blessings). God answered Elijah's prayer because God is faithful (**2 Tim.2:13**).

**5. God's Plan does not succeed or fail because of man, whether king or prophet, but it succeeds because of the faithfulness of God.**

Recovery of this national crisis was because of the faithfulness of God to His sovereign Plan. As well as to the effective prayer life of **not just one** spiritual pivot, but the prayers of 7,000 other believers!

**Elijah thought** he was the only voice for God against apostasy and evil but that wasn't true. Sometimes we think that nobody knows or cares; but in truth there are many invisible heroes of the faith praying with us (**1 Kings 19:18/ pivot**).

I know we have all prayed for other people that we do not know as others pray for us. This is **pivot power of invisible heroes of the faith** living all over the world (Mark 11:22-26) (i.e. our foreign missionaries).