

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

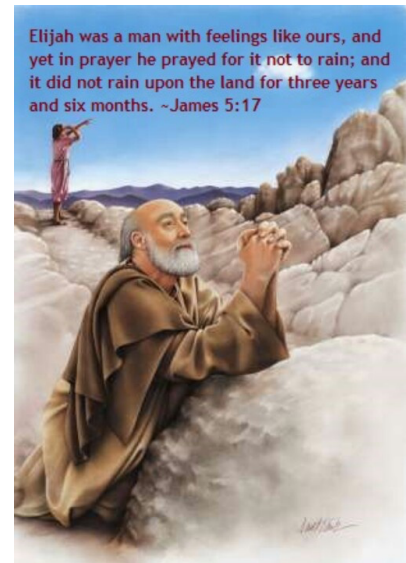
Theme: "The Testing of Your Faith"

Lesson: 41 Text: 17,18 Date: 2-4-24

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TEXT AND STUDY NOTES



(17) **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.

(1 Kings 17:1,7,14; 18:1,37-46; Lk 4:24-26; Acts 12:1-17; 14:15; 18:24-28; Rom 12:9-12; 2 Cor 8:16,17,22,23)

(18) Then **he prayed again**, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

**(Jonah 2:1-10; Job 5:8-10; Ps 72:6; 147:8;
Is 45:8; 55:10,11; Joel 2:23; Zech 10:1;
Mt 5:44-47; Acts 10:1,2; Heb 6:7; Rev 11:1-8)**

LIFE APPLICATION

The effectiveness of such a prayer is seen in Elijah, whose prayers actually affected the weather cycle between drought and rain. Striking is that Elijah is called "a man of like nature (*homoioopathēs*)," that is, a man who faced the same dilemma as James' readers. The selection of Elijah as an example might further suggest that James' readers are primarily early church pastors. Elijah, considered the greatest of preachers, was, like the pastors in the Diaspora, confronted with persecution and afflicted with a sense of personal failure to the point of finding his own ministry useless. An Elijah complex is such a near-constant feeling of persecution. The external persecution of the early Christians was also the cause of their emotional and spiritual distresses. Elijah is held up as an example not of despair but of one whose despair was relieved by God's answering his prayers.

ings are grammatically possible. In order to remain within James' own theological perspective, it might be best to stay with the passive understanding that sees the prayer engendered by God and not by the person praying. James sees justification as passive (2:24). Though he has a high attitude toward prayer, he still states that Jesus is the One who raises up the sick (5:15). Thus the sentence could be paraphrased: "The prayer engendered by God in the man whom He has justified is extremely effective."

Explain the "balance of prayer":

On the one hand pray fervently to God – On the other hand pray that God's will be done