



ELIJAH AND PRAYER. By: *David W. Lankford*

P.O. Box 502 Casar, NC 28020 704-538-8060 ("Radio" Blog Talk/ "Media"/ TV website, www.thevoiceofevangelism.com)

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Today, we want to take our scripture text from **James 5:17-18**, **"Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit"**. As Christians, we oftentimes discuss the subject of prayer and how one can pray more effectively. James, the half-brother of Jesus Christ, uses the prophet Elijah as someone that we can model our prayer life after. I know as you read this newsletter, you're probably wondering; how can I be as effective as Elijah the prophet of God? After all, he was one of Israel's greatest prophets. He took on evil Ahab and his wife Jezebel, he brought a punishment of drought upon the land, called down fire from heaven, and was translated to heaven in a whirlwind accompanied by fiery chariots. Too often we fail to grasp the fact that every Bible character we read about was just as human as we are. But while living their lives and in relationship to Jehovah they too faced days of peril, trials, and temptations. When we witness the great things that many of the patriarchs accomplished, we oftentimes feel as though God was with them in a greater way than with us. But the scriptures are replete, God is a respecter of no man. For we read in **Romans 2:11**, **"For there is no respect of persons with God"**. What God has done for one, He will do for all, if we meet the requirements found within His Word. You may ask

yourself the question; how much do I have in common with a man such as Elijah, or how could I possibly emulate his powerful prayers? God is not asking you to emulate the prophet Elijah; He is challenging us to pray as the prophet prayed. James said that Elijah was a man that was subjected to the same types of passion that all men are subjected to. Elijah was tempted because of his human passion, but he did not allow that to affect his prayer life. Paul the apostle said in **1st Corinthians 10:13**, **"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"**. Elijah endured the same temptations that each of us encounter because he was subjected to the same passions. The word *passions* in the Greek simply means, similarly affected. Elijah suffered the same identical things that everyone of us endure daily. Apparently Elijah did not pray because he was a great man, perhaps he became a great man, and a great prophet, because he prayed. I want to establish some fundamentals regarding prayer. The Bible says that he prayed, thus a person cannot be effective in prayer unless one prays in the first place. If our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ was a man of prayer, certainly as followers of Christ we need to pray. We know that prayer physically altered the body of Christ and it will alter ours. We read in **Luke 9:29**, **"And as he**

prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening". If prayer changed the sinless body and countenance of Christ our Lord; what kind of effect would prayer have on our lives if we prayed daily? Oftentimes as professing Christians we fail to pray and seek God. It is not the length of time, nor the place, nor the posture, but the sincerity of the heart when we pray. I believe the more time that one spends in prayer the more effective their prayer life will become. One of the great prayers that Elijah prayed brought the fire of God down from heaven at Mount Carmel. What I find profound about that event is that here in the book of James he describes one having a very fiery prayer life. We read in **James 5:16**, **"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"**. The word *fervent* #1754 in the Greek means: *to be active, energetic, being the prayer of a righteous man brought on by the operation of the holy Ghost*. I've often said, if anyone knows how to pray the holy Ghost knows how to pray. Paul declared in **Romans 8:26**, **"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"**. The manifested presence of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost was demonstrated by cloven tongues of fire sitting upon every man's head. That, my friend, is fervent prayer, to say the least! When we pray our goal should be to pray in the Spirit. We

are challenged by Paul in how to pray here in **Ephesians 6:18**, **“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints”**. To supplicate literally means to pray one for another. We read in **Jude 20**, **“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost”**. When praying in the Spirit it is evidenced by this verse that prayer builds our faith and edifies our spirit. Why in the world would anyone not want to pray in the Holy Ghost? Elijah prayed an effective prayer because God heard his prayer and sent fire from heaven to consume his water logged sacrifice to dispel the false prophets of Baal. The Bible says that Elijah was a righteous man and because of that he did not allow sin to cloud his conversation with God. Elijah prayed and that prayer was for a drought. Rain was a sign of God’s blessings, thus when God withheld the rain it was a sign of discipline from God. We read in **Jeremiah 3:3**, **“Therefore the showers have been withholden, and there hath been no latter rain; and thou hadst a whore’s forehead, thou refusedst to be ashamed”**. What a powerful testimony in that the man of God prayed and God shut up the heavens to turn the people’s hearts back to Him in repentance. You see, I still believe there is an opportunity for a move of God in this nation. All hope is not lost because God still sits on His most holy throne. Can you imagine what would happen in our nation if corporately we all begin to fast and pray and pour our hearts out to God fervently? I’m convinced some things will never happen until we fast and

pray. Jesus said in **Matthew 17:21**, **“Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting”**. I am challenging those of you reading this newsletter to fast and pray with us. My wife and I begin each New Year with prayer and fasting. The psalmist declared in **Psalms 35:13**, **“I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom”**. Fasting is one of the greatest New Testament channels of power, but the least used in the church today. When was the last time you heard a preacher call for a solemn assembly and to sanctify a fast? I don’t know when I have heard a mega-church, or it’s pastor, or ministry that has called the people of God to a time of prayer and fasting. God is not limited, but we have limited God because we do not seek his face with all of our hearts. The Word of God declares in **Deuteronomy 4:29**, **“But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul”**. Jesus was our example in fasting: He fasted 40 days and 40 night and afterward He hungered. I challenge you to get hungry for God and pray for an outpouring of the Holy Ghost that has not been witnessed in more than a 100 years. Prayer and fasting is vital if you want to cultivate a vibrant spiritual life in these last days. When people begin to fast and pray their spiritual growth and development abounds exponentially. It is high time for the body of Christ to get off of the milk and to get on the meat of God’s Word and seek Him the scriptural way. After the 3 ½ year period had expired, Elijah prayed again and the heavens were opened and there was a great deluge, a freshet, with copious amounts of rain began falling upon the earth. I believe you and I, through prayer and fasting, can not only turn America but the world upside down if we obey God’s Word. The question is very simple; how hungry and how much of

God do you want in this hour? You can have all of God you want but we must meet a condition first and that condition is: God wants all of you! Can God have all of you or is there a particular part of your life you’re holding back from complete commitment to him: is it your job, your spouse, your aspirations, or your private sins that keeps you from complete commitment? Only you can answer that question when it comes to seeking God. You will never know how greatly and powerfully God will bless you and touch your life, if you will simply humble your-self under the mighty hand of God? Fasting is not easy, so I encourage you to discipline your mind and set a particular date when you will start your fast and seek His face diligently. Fasting is a spiritual adventure and no one ever knows where it will take them. God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, and you will be rewarded if you seek Him with all your heart. I’m expecting God to begin to move as never before. Do not miss out on what God is going to do. This is your hour and opportunity to be a part of what God is going to do here in the time of the end. Until next month, remain steadfast and I pray that many of you will join with us in this great spiritual endeavor.

Serving With You All,

Pastor David W. Lankford

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