

James 5:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours; he prayed earnestly and it did not rain for three and a half years. James demystifies prophetic prayer: Elijah's powerful intercession flowed from earnest faith, not superhuman status.

Reformed teaching encourages bold prayer grounded in God's Word. Elijah's example assures believers their prayers matter.

Historical Context

Elijah's drought narrative (1 Kings 17-18) was well-known. James highlights his humanity to inspire ordinary Christians under persecution to pray with prophetic persistence.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What situations need Elijah-style prayer?
2. How can you grow in persistent intercession?
3. Who can join you in bold prayer efforts?

Interlinear Text

Ἐλίας ἄνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθὴς ἡμῖν καὶ
Elias a man was subject to like passions as we are and
G2243 G444 G2258 G3663 G2254 G2532

προσευχῇ προσηγένετο τοῦ μὴ ἔβρεξεν καὶ οὐκ ἔβρεξεν
earnestly he prayed G3588 not it rained and not it rained
G4335 G4336 G3361 G1026 G2532 G3756 G1026

ἐπὶ τῇς γῆς ἐνιαυτοὺς τρεῖς καὶ μῆνας ἔξι.
on G3588 the earth years by the space of three and months six
G1909 G1093 G1763 G5140 G2532 G3376 G1803

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 17:1 (Parallel theme): And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the LORD God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

Luke 4:25 (Parallel theme): But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

Revelation 11:6 (Parallel theme): These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

1 Kings 18:1 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass after many days, that the word of the LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth.

Acts 14:15 (Parallel theme): And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein:

Acts 10:26 (Parallel theme): But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man.

Romans 11:2 (Parallel theme): God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying,

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