

WEATHER WAS AN APPROVED TARGET OF PRAYER

by **David Lee Burris**



2 CHRONICLES 6:26 KJV

When the heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; yet if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou dost afflict them;



2 CHRONICLES 6:27 WEB

then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of your servants, and of your people Israel, when you teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on your land, which you have given to your people for an inheritance.

The order of Solomon's prayer is to be observed. First and chiefly, he prays for repentance and forgiveness, which is the chief blessing, and the only solid foundation of other mercies: he then prays for temporal mercies; thereby teaching us what things to mind & desire most in our prayers.



If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14

**“THE EFFECTIVE,
FERVENT PRAYER OF A
RIGHTEOUS MAN
AVAILS MUCH.”**

JAMES 5:16

The Example of Effective Fervent Prayer Was Elijah

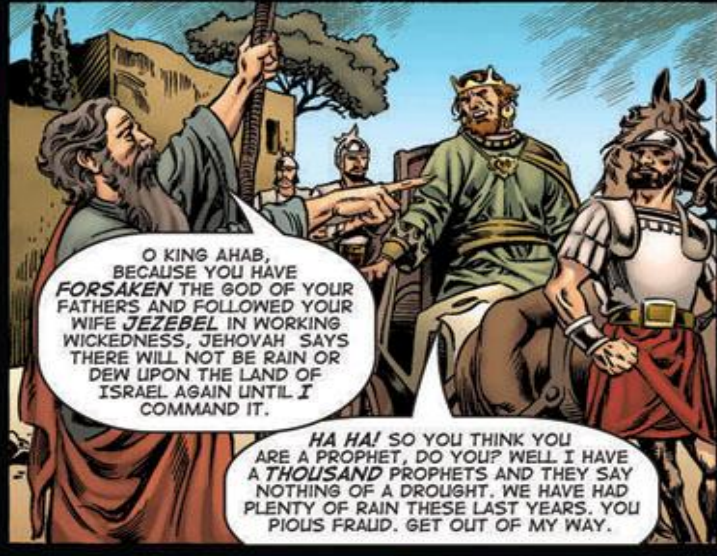
17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

James 5 (KJV)



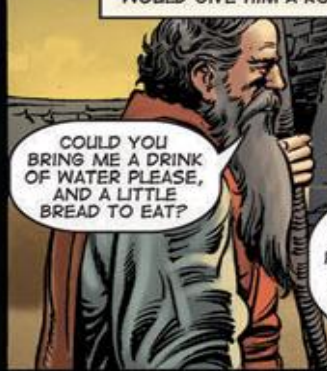
BUT THERE WAS ONE PROPHET OF THE LIVING GOD THAT WOULDN'T STAY HIDDEN: ELIJAH.



O KING AHAB, BECAUSE YOU HAVE FORSAKEN THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS AND FOLLOWED YOUR WIFE JEZEBEL IN WORKING WICKEDNESS, JEHOVAH SAYS THERE WILL NOT BE RAIN OR DEW UPON THE LAND OF ISRAEL AGAIN UNTIL I COMMAND IT.

HA HA! SO YOU THINK YOU ARE A PROPHET. DO YOU? WELL I HAVE A THOUSAND PROPHETS AND THEY SAY NOTHING OF A DROUGHT. WE HAVE HAD PLENTY OF RAIN THESE LAST YEARS. YOU PIOUS FRAUD. GET OUT OF MY WAY.

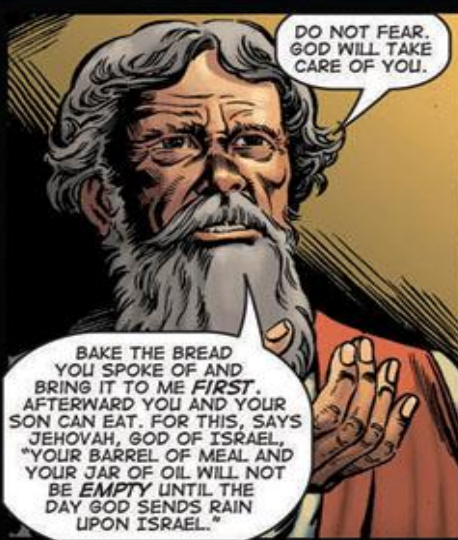
AS THE FAMINE GOT WORSE, PEOPLE BEGAN TO STARVE. THE FALSE PROPHETS CALLED ON BAAL, BUT BAAL COULD NOT ANSWER. THE DROUGHT CONTINUED WITH NOT A DROP OF RAIN OR DEW. GOD SENT ELIJAH DOWN TO THE HOME OF A WIDOW WOMAN, TELLING HIM THAT SHE WOULD GIVE HIM A ROOM AND FEED HIM UNTIL THE DROUGHT WAS OVER.



COULD YOU BRING ME A DRINK OF WATER PLEASE, AND A LITTLE BREAD TO EAT?

I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I HAVE ENOUGH FLOUR AND OIL LEFT TO BAKE TWO LITTLE PIECES OF BREAD. I WAS JUST ABOUT TO COOK IT FOR MY SON AND I. WE WERE GOING TO EAT IT AND THEN LIE DOWN TO DIE.

THERE IS NO HOPE. GOD IS PUNISHING US FOR OUR SINS.



DO NOT FEAR. GOD WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU.

BAKE THE BREAD YOU SPOKE OF AND BRING IT TO ME FIRST. AFTERWARD YOU AND YOUR SON CAN EAT. FOR THIS, SAYS JEHOVAH, GOD OF ISRAEL, "YOUR BARREL OF MEAL AND YOUR JAR OF OIL WILL NOT BE EMPTY UNTIL THE DAY GOD SENDS RAIN UPON ISRAEL."



IT'S TRUE! THERE IS STILL FLOUR IN MY BARREL, AND OIL IN THE JAR!

THE FAMINE CONTINUED FOR THREE YEARS. THE PEOPLE WERE STARVING, BUT THEY CONTINUED TO WORSHIP THE FALSE GOD BAAL.



WHY DOESN'T BAAL HEAR US AND SEND RAIN?

MAYBE BAAL IS JUST A DUMB IDOL. HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY EARS.

JEZEBEL AND AHAB BLAMED ELIJAH FOR THE FAMINE. THEY SENT SOLDIERS THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND AND EVEN INTO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES TO FIND ELIJAH. THEIR ORDERS WERE TO KILL HIM ON SIGHT.



SEND US ELIJAH. IF YOU ARE HIDING HIM YOU WILL BE KILLED.



AHAB. ARE YOU LOOKING FOR ME?

ARE YOU THE ONE THAT IS TROUBLING ISRAEL WITH THIS FAMINE?

YOU ARE THE ONE THAT IS TROUBLING ISRAEL WITH YOUR IDOLS. LET US HAVE A CONTEST BETWEEN JEHOVAH AND BAAL. BRING YOUR 850 PROPHETS AND MEET ME AT MOUNT CARMEL.

A CONTEST YOU SAY? SOUNDS INTERESTING. WE'LL SEE YOU THERE.

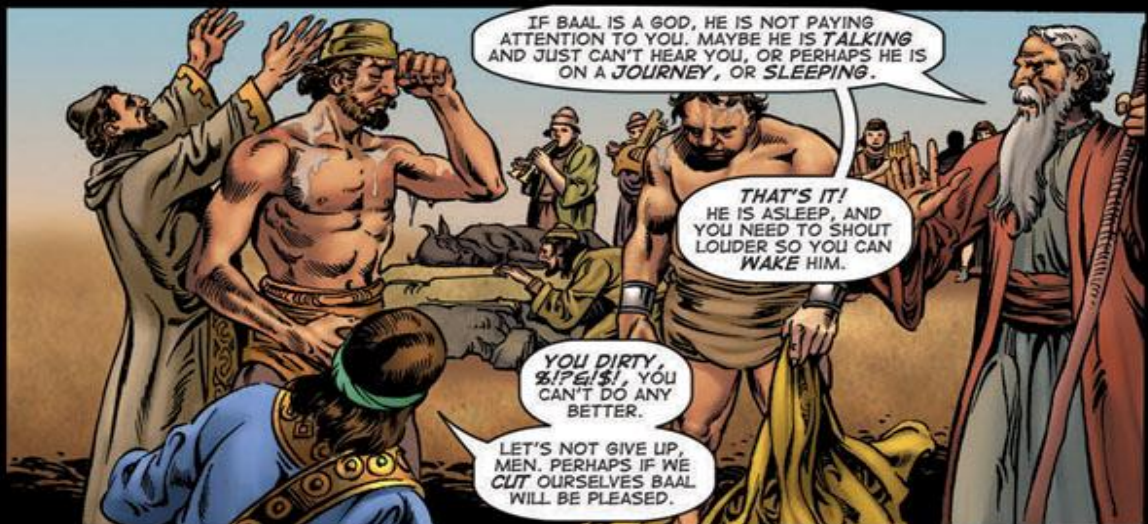
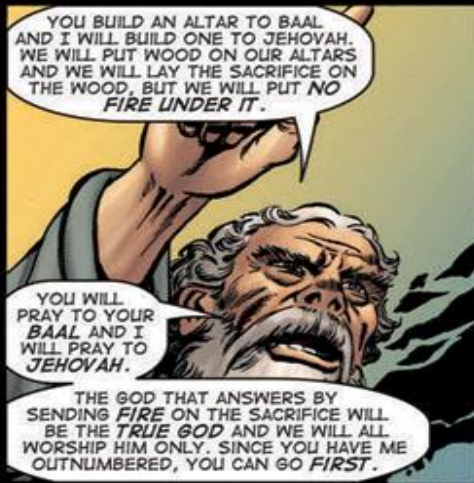


SEVERAL DAYS LATER ON MOUNT CARMEL.

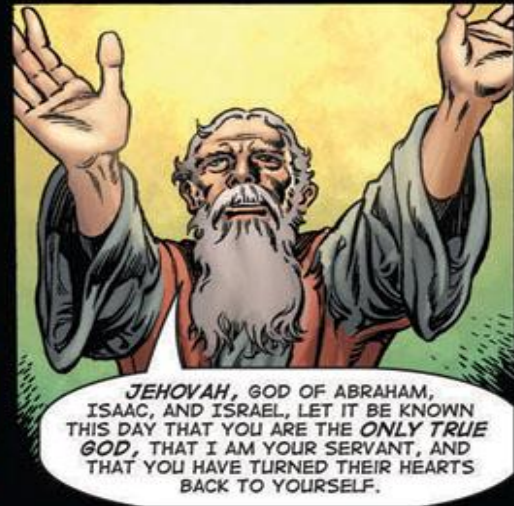
HOW LONG ARE YOU GOING TO STAND BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS? THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD. IF JEHOVAH IS GOD, THEN WORSHIP HIM ONLY. IF BAAL IS GOD, THEN WORSHIP HIM. MAKE UP YOUR MINDS.

I CHALLENGE YOU PROPHETS OF BAAL TO A CONTEST. WE WILL FIND OUT WHO IS THE TRUE GOD.

YES, A CONTEST BETWEEN THE GODS. WHAT SHALL WE DO?









1 Kings 18:41-44 Then Elijah said to Ahab, “Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain.” So, Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, “Go up now, look toward the sea.” So, he went up and looked, and said, “There is nothing.” And seven times he said, “Go again.” Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, “There is a cloud, as small as a man’s hand, rising out of the sea!” So, he said, “Go up, say to Ahab, ‘Prepare your chariot, and go down before the rain stops you.’”



Elijah and the Drought

APOLOGETICS PRESS @ALLEGED DISCREPANCIES

Twice in the New Testament one can read of the drought of Elijah's day that lasted for three and a half years. Jesus once referred to this famine while addressing fellow Jews in His hometown of Nazareth (Luke 4:25-26), while James mentioned it near the end of his epistle (5:17-18). Some have a problem with the drought of "three years and six months," because 1 Kings 18:1 says: "The word of the Lord came to Elijah, **in the third year**, saying, 'Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth'" (emp. added). Soon thereafter, "there was a heavy rain" (18:45; cf. 18:15). The question is, did the rain come "**in** the third year" (1st Kings 18:1) or **after** "three years and six months" (Luke 4:25; James 5:17)?

Previously, in 1st Kings 17:1, Elijah had prophesied to Ahab that "there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." Afterward, God instructed Elijah to "turn east & hide by the Brook Cherith" (17:3). There he lived, eating the bread and meat that ravens brought him twice a day, until "the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land" (17:7). God then sent Elijah to Zarephath to live with a widow and her son. After the child became sick and died, Elijah raised him from the dead (17:17-24). Immediately following this event, the inspired historian wrote: "And it came to pass after many days the word of the Lord came to Elijah, **in the third year**, saying, 'Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth'" (18:1, emp. added).

Those who contend that Luke 4:25 and James 5:17 contradict 1 Kings 18:1 (cf. Matheney and Honeycutt, 1970, 3:210) **assume** that “in the third year” refers to the drought. Yet, no proof exists for such an interpretation. First Kings 18:1 does not say, “. . . in the third year **of the drought**,” but only “in the third year.” Considering both the immediate context and the fact that originally there was no chapter break separating 1st Kings 17:24 and 18:1, the most natural reading is that Elijah was “in the third year” **of his residence in Zarephath**. Elijah, the local widow and her household ate of the miraculously replenished flour for “**(many) days**” (17:8-15, ASV). Sometime later Elijah revived the widow’s son. Then, “**it came to pass after many days** the word of the Lord came to Elijah” (18:1). It’s reasonable to conclude Elijah spent more than two years in Zarephath, since it was “in the third year” that God sent Elijah away from Zarephath to confront Ahab.

The “three years and six months” to which Jesus and James referred includes the two-plus years Elijah was in Zarephath and the several months Elijah lived at Brook Cherith.

Although skeptics would rather assume guilt on the part of the inspired historian, Jesus, and/or James, once again they are unable to present real evidence for a genuine Bible contradiction.

REFERENCES

Matheney, M. Pierce and Roy L. Honeycutt, Jr. (1970), *Broadman Bible Commentary: 1 Samuel-Nehemiah*, ed. Clifton J. Allen (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press).

TruthMagazine

The Proper Content of Our Prayers

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus sets forth a model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13). Luke records that when Jesus had finished praying, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.” Again, he offered a model for prayer (Luke 11:1-4). These passages become a starting point as we consider the appropriate focus for our prayer. Significantly, Jesus shows that **prayer should have a threefold focus**. We should pray for the **things of God**. We should pray for the **things of others**. We should pray for the **things of self**.

We Should Pray For The Things Of God

1. **Praise To His Name.** Our prayers should express praise for God’s name. Jesus began the model prayer by saying, “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2). Strong defines the Greek word hagiozo, which is translated “hallowed,” as “to make holy, i.e. (ceremonially) purify or consecrate; (mentally) to venerate.” Normally it is used in Scripture to indicate that we must become holy, pure, and separate from sin. Here it indicates that God is holy, pure, and separate from sin. When Jesus ended the model prayer, he returned to the theme of praise: “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” (Matthew 6:13). We must give unto the Lord the glory that is due his name and worship him in holy array (1st Chronicles 16:28-29; Psalm 29:1-2; 96:7-9). The importance of treating God as holy and giving him proper honor can’t be overstated (Leviticus 10:1-3).

2. **Furtherance Of His Kingdom.** We should pray for the furtherance of God's kingdom. Jesus prayed, "Your kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10; Luke 11:2). During Jesus' earthly ministry, the kingdom of God was at hand (Matt. 4:17). However, he affirmed that the kingdom would soon be established (Mark 9:1). This occurred on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:6-8; 2:1-4). Thereafter, as the gospel message was proclaimed, the kingdom of God was treated as a present reality (Acts 8:12; 14:21-22).

Significantly, in writing to the Colossians, Paul affirmed God had delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son (Col. 1:13-14). The Hebrew writer said that his readers were in the process of receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28). John also spoke of the kingdom as a present reality (Revelation 1:6, 9).

Therefore, since this prayer of Jesus has already been fulfilled, what relevance does it have for those of us today? Well, it is always appropriate for Christians to pray that the borders of God's kingdom will be enlarged (2nd Thessalonians 3:1-2).

3. **God's Will Be Done.** We should pray that God's will be done. Jesus prayed, "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). The will of God should be practiced by society as a whole, and the local church in particular. However, we must not forget that it has application in our own private lives. Jesus manifested this attitude in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:39, 42). Those who think otherwise have no hope of reaching heaven (Matthew 7:21-23). Only those who do the will of God will live forever (1st John 2:15-17).

4. **Thanksgiving For His Blessings.** When we pray, we should be thankful for God's many blessings. The Psalmist said, "Enter his gates with thanksgiving. Give thanks to him. Bless his Holy Name" (Psalm 100:1-4).

We should manifest a spirit of thanksgiving as we make our requests known to God (Philippians 4:6-7). In writing to the Colossians, Paul said, “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving” (Colossians 4:2). Addressing the disciples in Macedonia, he said, “Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:16).

We Should Pray For the Things of Others

1. **World Leaders.** We should pray for world leaders. Paul urged Timothy to pray for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in godliness and dignity (1st Timothy 2:1-2). Cyrus, king of Persia, issued a decree that the Jews could return home, rebuild the temple, re-institute sacrifice and offerings, and also pray for the king and his sons (Ezra 6:9-10). In one of the two Psalms attributed to his name, Solomon prayed that God would endow the king with wisdom & bless his sons with righteousness (Psalm 72). The importance of reverencing God & His Word can’t be overstated, especially as in application to rulers (Proverbs 8:13). The Lord establishes and removes kings (Daniel 2:21). The Most High still rules in the kingdoms of men (Daniel 5:21). Righteousness still exalts a nation, and sin is still a reproach and disgrace to any people (Proverbs 14:34). The Lord will turn a fruitful land into barren wasteland because of the wickedness of those who dwell in it (Psalm 107:33). Therefore, let us pray for leaders, that they will do what is right, and continue to permit us to do what is right.

2. **Fellow Christians.** We should pray for our fellow-Christians. Paul continually prayed for the disciples at Ephesus, that God would grant them a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him (Eph. 1:15-17).

Concerning the Philippians, Paul prayed that their love would abound more in real knowledge and all discernment, so that they may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ (Philippians 1:8).

3. **Ministers Of The Gospel.** We should pray for ministers of the gospel. Paul commended the Corinthian disciples by saying, “You also joined in helping us through your prayers” (2nd Corinthians 1:11). He asked the Ephesians to pray for him that he might open his mouth with boldness in proclaiming the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:18-20). In a similar vein, he also asked the Colossians to pray that he would speak the truth clearly (Colossians 4:2-4).

4. **Lost Sinners.** We should also pray for lost sinners. When Jesus saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep that had no shepherd. Recognizing the great work that lay ahead, he asked the disciples to pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into his harvest (Matthew 9:36-38).

Paul manifested a similar attitude toward his countrymen when he said, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved” (Romans 10:1-3). In fact, if it would have changed their lost condition, Paul could have wished himself accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of his brethren, my kinsmen by race (Romans 9:1-3). Alas, we stand or fall as individual persons: The soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:20). Each one must bear his own load (Galatians 6:5).

Nevertheless, one way we can bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2) is by praying for the lost, that they will realize their undone condition, that they will respond to God’s grace and obey the gospel while there is time and opportunity (2nd Peter 3:9-11).

5. **Our Enemies.** We should also pray for our enemies. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus repeatedly challenged traditional concepts of goodness. After addressing the subjects of murder (Matthew 5:21-22), of adultery (5:27-28), of false vows (5:33-37), and of vengeance (5:38-42), the Lord focused on the attitude we should manifest toward our enemies. Instead of hating them, we should learn to love our enemies, even to the point of praying for those who would persecute us (Matthew 5:43).

In this regard, as in every area of life, Jesus practiced what he preached. Hanging on the cross, he looked down at his tormentors, and said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:33-34). When Stephen became the first Christian martyr, he manifested a similarly forgiving attitude for those who stoned him (Acts 7:59-60).

In like manner, we should pray for our enemies. God must inevitably take vengeance on wicked men (2nd Thessalonians 1:7-10; Hebrews 10:30-31). However, we must not waste our time by focusing on such things. Rather, let us do what's good to our enemies, even to the point of prayer. By following such a course, we will avoid being overcome by evil, but hopefully will overcome evil with good (Romans 12:19-21).

6. **The Sick.** We should also pray for the sick. The Psalmist said, "In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God for help; He heard my voice out of His temple, and my cry for help before Him came into His ears" (Psalm 18:6). Again, David said, "O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you healed me" (Psalm 30:2). Similarly, we should turn to God in times of sickness, distress, and dread. In the New Testament, we read of men of God praying for the physically and spiritually sick. In this regard, Peter prayed for Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:18-24), and Paul prayed for the father of Publius (Acts 28:7-8).

We Should Pray For The Things Of Self

1. **The Necessities Of Life.** We should pray for the necessities of life. In Matthew's account of the model prayer, Jesus said, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). Luke says, "Give us each day our daily bread" (Luke 11:3). Note emphasis is on the present, not the future. When God fed the Israelites with manna in the wilderness, they were allowed to collect only what they could eat in a day, and any food that was hoarded until the morrow spoiled (Exodus 16:16-21). Thus, they were taught to rely upon God for their daily provisions.

Since abundance and want tempt us, though in different ways, we should ask for only what is needful (Proverbs 30:8-9). While covetousness will consume our souls, godliness with mental contentment is great gain (1st Timothy 6:6-11). Therefore, we should not worry about the morrow regarding food, clothing, or shelter. Instead, let us trust God to provide our needs from day to day (Matthew 6:24-33).

2. **The Forgiveness Of Sins.** We should pray for the forgiveness of sins. In Matthew's account of the model prayer, Jesus said, "And forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). Luke records, "And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us" (Luke 11:4). The burden of guilt is more than we can bear, while the blessings of forgiveness are beyond compare (Psalm 32:1-5). How wonderful it is that the Lord God is compassionate, gracious, and forgiving (Exodus 34:6-7; Psalm 103:2-3). If you will approach God on His terms, "Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

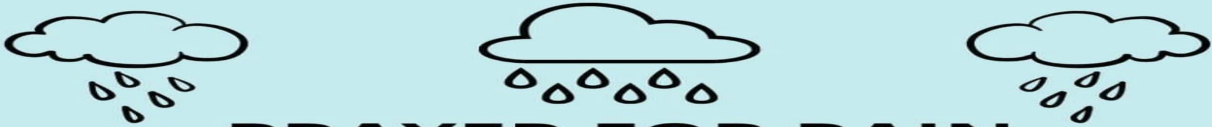
3. **Help In Time Of Temptation.** We should pray for help in time of temptation. Jesus said, “Don’t lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13; Luke 11:4). The Greek word *peirasmos* is defined by Strong’s as “a putting to proof by experience of good or experience of evil.” Thayer says it refers to “an experiment, an attempt, a trial, a proving.”

Temptations can be good or bad. Certain temptations come from Satan as he would cause us to stumble and entice us to sin (Luke 22:31-34, 40). Other temptations come from the Lord as he tests our faith & proves our character (James 1:2; Romans 8:28). Yet, God is faithful to the faithful. He won’t let his child be tempted beyond his or her strength, but with temptation will also provide the way of escape, that they may be able to endure it (1st Corinthians 10:13). Therefore, let us pray in time of temptation, and diligently look for that promised way of escape, knowing that the spirit is often willing but the flesh is often weak (Matthew 26:41).

4. **Spiritual Growth and Maturity.** We should pray for spiritual growth and maturity. Concerning the saints at Ephesians, Paul prayed that they might be strengthened spiritually and filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:14-19). Concerning the brethren in Macedonia, Paul prayed that they might increase and abound in love and holiness (1st Thessalonians 3:11). If we lack wisdom, James indicated that we should pray that God will fill up this deficiency (James 1:5). Notwithstanding, the realization of this prayer is not one-way. God will generously bestow this gift if we diligently search after it (Proverbs 2:1-5).

5. All Things. We should pray for all things that concern us. Paul said, “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God” (Philippians 4:6-7). We should approach God with our wants and wishes, our sins and sorrows, our cares and concerns. Hannah fervently prayed for a son (1st Samuel 1:10-18). David prayed to God when he fled from Absalom, his son (Psalm 3:1-4). After having fled from God and forsaken his call to duty, Jonah prayed from the stomach of the great fish (Jonah 2:1-2). Before Jesus choose the apostles, he went off to a nearby mountain to pray, and he spent the whole night in prayer to God (Luke 6:12-13). Before his betrayal, Jesus poured out his heart to God in the Gethsemane Garden (Matthew 26:36).

Therefore, let us cast our burdens upon the Lord, and pour out our heart before him, fully trusting that he will sustain us (Psalms 55:22; 62:8).



PRAYER FOR RAIN

I pray for an overflow that will take away the heat and cool the parched earth. I pray for rains to fall and grow food for people and their livestock. Lord, we ask all these in Jesus' Name, Amen.



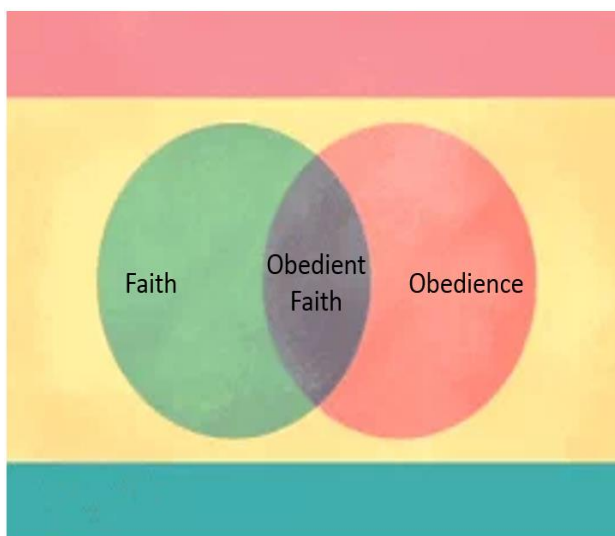
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AT THE NEXUS OF GRACE & GLORY

Five Steps For Saving:

- HEARING:
- Romans 10: 17; Matthew 7: 24 - 27
- BELIEVING:
- Hebrews 11: 6; Mark 16: 15, 16
- REPENTING:
- Acts 2: 38; 17: 30; Luke 13: 3
- CONFESSING:
- Matthew 10: 32, 33; Acts 8: 36, 37
- BAPTISM:
- Romans 6: 3 – 5; Acts 8: 36 – 38



O That Will Be Glory

2. *Wh* O that will be glory for me, e grace,

I an Glory for me, glory for me; ce,

When by His grace I shall look on His face, e

That will be glory, be glory for me. me.

