

James 5:13-20

1. These verses seem like an abrupt change from the topic of wealth, oppression, faithfulness and the arrogant rich.
2. The topic continues in the line of suffering, but deals with restoration from sickness and sin.
3. The word “prayer” from three Greek words is used 8x in the first five verses:
 - a. *proseuchomai* (verb) – meaning “to pray” (5:13, 14, 17)
 - i. *proseuche* (noun) – “prayer” (5:17)
 - b. *euchomai* – (verb) – “to pray” used to say “I pray” or “I wish” (5:16)
 - i. *euche* – (noun) – a prayer comprising a vow, a prayer (5:15)
 - c. *deesis* - “a need”, “a entreaty” and is translated “supplication”, “Prayer”, “entreaty” (5:16)

James 5:13 – “Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

	2553 [e]	5100 [e]	1722 [e]	4771 [e]	4336 [e]	2114 [e]	5100 [e]	5567 [e]
	Kakopathei	tis	en	hymin	<u>proseuchesthō</u>	euthymei	tis	<u>psalletō</u>
13	Κακοπαθεῖ	τις	ἐν	ὑμῖν ?	προσευχέσθω .	εὐθυμεῖ	τις ?	ψαλλέτω .
	Is suffering hardships	anyone	among	you	Let him pray	Is cheerful	anyone	Let him sing praises
	V-PIA-3S	IPro-NMS	Prep	PPro-D2P	V-PMM/P-3S	V-PIA-3S	IPro-NMS	V-PMA-3S

1. Seems to be the closing of the letter, because the theme of the letter continues but also expands to a larger setting and provides advice on helping fix the problem:
 - a. One, first mention of “cheerful”
 - b. Two, leaders and people are given advice on how to help those wanting to recover from the sins James has rebuked them for.
2. “cheerful” or “happy” – *euthymeo* – describes a state of emotions instead of circumstances. In Acts 27:22, 25 it means “peace of mind” while on a sinking ship.

5:14 – “Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

	770 [e]	5100 [e]	1722 [e]	4771 [e]	4341 [e]	3588 [e]	4245 [e]	3588 [e]	1577 [e]	2532 [e]
	asthenei	tis	en	hymin	proskalesasthō	tous	presbyterous	tēs	<u>ekklēsias</u>	kai
14	ἀσθενεῖ	τις	ἐν	ὑμῖν ?	προσκαλεσάσθω	τοὺς	πρεσβυτέρους	τῆς	ἐκκλησίας ,	καὶ
	Is sick	anyone	among	you	Let him call near	the	elders	of the	church	and
	V-PIA-3S	IPro-NMS	Prep	PPro-D2P	V-AMM-3S	Art-AMP	Adj-AMP	Art-GFS	N-GFS	Conj

	4336 [e]	1909 [e]	846 [e]	218 [e]	846 [e]	1637 [e]	1722 [e]	3588 [e]	3686 [e]	3588 [e]	2962 [e]
	<u>proseuasthōsan</u>	ep'	auton	<u>aleipsantes</u>	auton	elaiō	en	tō	onomati	tou	Kyriou
	προσευξάσθωσαν	ἐπ'	αὐτόν ,	ἀλείψαντες	αὐτόν	ἐλαίῳ	ἐν	τῷ	ὀνόματι	τοῦ	Κυρίου .
	let them pray	over	him	having anointed	him	with oil	in	the	name	of the	Lord
	V-AMM-3P	Prep	PPro-AM3S	V-APA-NMP	PPro-AM3S	N-DNS	Prep	Art-DNS	N-DNS	Art-GMS	N-GMS

1. “sick” – *astheneo* – means “to be weak”
 - a. Some think “weak” spiritually
 - b. In the Gospels *astheneo* refers to physical weakness which includes illness
2. “elders” were the leading men of the local synagogue. This could be a Jewish setting of believers, or this could be the early leadership of “elders” in the church

- a. Paul and Barnabas set up elders in churches shortly after or right at this time Acts 14 which is 46-48 AD (James is writing in 45 AD to the same territory that includes Antioch where Paul and Barnabas leave from to start churches)
 - b. Elders are never mentioned along with pastors, so pastors are elders. In fact in Acts 20:28 the Ephesian elders are told to “shepherd” the flock
3. “having anointed” –
- a. *Chrio* – 78x times used to refer to priest. And, in the NT it is used as a metaphor for consecration, not actual anointing.
 - b. *Aleipho* – James uses this word. This word was used of anointing the face or body to bcreate beauty or hygienic purpose 9x and with ceremonial significance 4x in the OT. In the LXX and in Matt. 6, Mark 16, Luke 7, John 11 and 12 *aleipho* refers to cosmetic or hygienic anointing. This is the only word James could use if he referred to the physical act oif anointing. Neither word has a medical signficance in Scripture
 - i. *Mark 6:13* – “*they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them.*”
 - ii. *In Luke 10:34* where “oil” – *elaion* – is used for medicinal the verb *epicheo* – “put on” – is used.
4. “with oil” – two possible purposes:
- a. Medicinal
 - b. Religioius
 - i. Sacramental – the early Greek church practiced *euchlaion* (*euche* – “prayer” and *elaion* = “oil”). Rome broke away and called it the sacrament of extreme unction (852 AD) for the dying to prepare the soul for death by removing sin. At Vatican II the rite was changed to “the anointing of the sick” for those very, very ill.
 - ii. Symbolic – symbolized a person or things set apart for God such as the priests and their clothese in Exoldus 28

5:15 – “And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.

2532 [e]	3588 [e]	2171 [e]	3588 [e]	4102 [e]	4982 [e]	3588 [e]	2577 [e]	2532 [e]	1453 [e]	846 [e]	3588 [e]	2962 [e]	2579 [e]
kai	hē	<u>euchē</u>	tēs	pisteōs	sōsei	ton	kamnonta	kai	egerei	auton	ho	Kyrios	kan
15 καὶ	ἡ	<u>εὐχῆ</u>	τῆς	πίστεως	σώσει	τὸν	κάμνοντα	, καὶ	ἐγερεῖ	αὐτὸν	ὁ	Κύριος	, κὰν
And	the	prayer	-	of faith	will save	the one	ailing	and	will raise up	him	the	Lord	and if
Conj	Art-NFS	N-NFS	Art-GFS	N-GFS	V-FIA-3S	Art-AMS	V-PPA-AMS	Conj	V-FIA-3S	PPro-AM3S	Art-NMS	N-NMS	Conj

266 [e]	1510 [e]	4160 [e]	863 [e]	846 [e]
hamartias	ē	pepoiēkos	aphethēsetai	autō
ἁμαρτίας	ἢ	πεποιηκώς	, ἀφεθήσεται	αὐτῷ .
sins	he might be [one]	having committed	it will be forgiven	him
N-AFP	V-PSA-3S	V-RPA-NMS	V-FIP-3S	PPro-DM3S

5:16 – “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

1843 [e]	3767 [e]	240 [e]	3588 [e]	266 [e]	2532 [e]	2172 [e]	5228 [e]	240 [e]	3704 [e]	2390 [e]
Exomologeisthe	oun	allēlois	tas	hamartias	kai	euchesthe	hyper	allelōn	hopōs	iathete
16 Ἐξομολογεῖσθε	οὖν	ἀλλήλοις	τὰς	ἁμαρτίας	, καὶ	εὐχέσθε*	ὑπὲρ	ἀλλήλων	, ὅπως	ἰαθῆτε .
Confess	therefore	to one another	the	sins	and	pray	for	one another	so that	you may be healed
V-PMM-2P	Conj	RecPro-DMP	Art-AFP	N-AFP	Conj	V-PMM/P-2P	Prep	RecPro-GMP	Conj	V-ASP-2P

4183 [e]	2480 [e]	1162 [e]	1342 [e]	1754 [e]
poly	ischyei	deēsis	dikaiou	energoumenē
πολὺ	ἰσχύει	δέησις	δικαίου	ἐνεργουμένη .
Much	prevails	[the] prayer	of a righteous [man]	being made effective
Adj-ANS	V-PIA-3S	N-NFS	Adj-GMS	V-PPM-NFS

1. “Therefore” or “because of this” we should do something. “Because of” these two truths James just mentioned:
 - a. God is attentive to our prayers
 - b. God forgives our confessed sins
2. Because of these doctrinal truths, we should do these two things:
 - a. Confess our sins
 - b. Pray
3. This is the road to recovery. This is the proper response of the Syrian readers of this letter in 45 AD. If they want to recover, they will need to confess their sins, restore fellowship with the Lord and begin praying for others to do likewise – confess their sins and pray for healing (recovery)
4. It may be assumed that due to the sinful, rebellion towards the Lord these people are suffering consequences for their broken fellowship with the Lord.
 - a. There is persecution and oppression from the world. God will strengthen you in this.
 - b. But there is also chaos, sickness and death when walking (living) in darkness. This is the result of walking away from truth, light and life. God can restore you from this.
 - i. 1 Corinthians 11:28-30 – “Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.”
5. This verse ends encouraging the man who has maintained fellowship with the Lord or who has returned to fellowship with the Lord...the prayer of a righteous man is effective.
6. “Much prevails [the] prayer of a righteous [man] being made effective.”
 - a. “righteous [man]” is the man in fellowship with the Lord. The walking in the light as the Lord is in the light.
 - i. 1 John 1:6-9
 - b. “prayer” is *deesis* which is used alongside the other two words for prayer, but has the meaning of “a need”, “a entreaty”, “request”, “plea”, “petition” and is translated “supplication”, “Prayer”, “entreaty”
 - c. Three words are used to modify or qualify *deesis* “request”, “petition”, “prayer”, “supplication”:
 - i. “much” – *poly* – “much”, “many”
 - ii. “prevails” – *ischyei* – the word means “to be strong”, “to have power”
 - iii. “being made effective” – *energoumene* – from *energeo* meaning “work” or “to do”. Here it is a verb in the present tense meaning “it is working”. Prayer is working.

5:17 – “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.

2243 [e]	444 [e]	1510 [e]	3663 [e]	1473 [e]	2532 [e]	4335 [e]	4336 [e]	3588 [e]	3361 [e]	1026 [e]	2532 [e]
Ēlias	anthrōpos	ēn	homoioopathēs	hēmin	kai	proseuchē	prosēuxato	tou	mē	brexai	kai
17 Ἠλίας	ἄνθρωπος	ἦν	ὁμοιοπαθῆς	ἡμῖν	, καὶ	προσευχῇ	προσηύξατο	τοῦ	μὴ	βρέξαι	, καὶ
Elijah	a man	was	of like nature	to us	and	with fervent prayer	he prayed [for it]	-	not	to rain	and
N-NMS	N-NMS	V-IIA-3S	Adj-NMS	PPro-D1P	Conj	N-DFS	V-AIM-3S	Art-GNS	Adv	V-ANA	Conj

with a prayer he prayed

3756 [e]	1026 [e]	1909 [e]	3588 [e]	1093 [e]	1763 [e]	5140 [e]	2532 [e]	3376 [e]	1803 [e]
ouk	ebrexen	epi	tēs	gēs	eniautous	treis	kai	mēnas	hex
οὐκ	ἔβρεξεν	ἐπὶ	τῆς	γῆς	ἐνιαυτούς	τρεῖς	καὶ	μῆνας	ἕξ
not	it did rain	upon	the	earth	years	three	and	months	six
Adv	V-AIA-3S	Prep	Art-GFS	N-GFS	N-AMP	Adj-AMP	Conj	N-AMP	Adj-AMP

1. “with a prayer he prayed” – *proseuche proseuxato* – is a Semitic way of emphasis created by using two to the same words (or, root words) next to each other to intensify the original action.
 - a. Literally it says: “he prayed with a prayer”
 - b. The Semitic meaning translated into English communicates this way: “he prayed intensely”
2. Why Elijah?
 - a. Some other OT person praying could provide an example. Daniel, Abraham?
 - b. Even a different, more pointed, dramatic example from Elijah’s life would provide a better example: restoring life of the son of the Zarephath widow or the encounter on Mt. Carmel with the prophets of Baal?
 - c. It is not mentioned in the biblical text that Elijah prayed for it NOT to rain. This account comes from Jewish literature.
 - d. Elijah may be used because:
 - i. His generation and the oppression of the poor by the wealthy (Ahab, Jezebel, Naboth’s vineyard) resulted in major national repentance.
 - ii. The prayer of one righteous man led to the restoration of many people and the covering over of multitudes of sin
 - iii. Elijah himself struggled with his faith and his restoration covered over his “sins”
 - iv. The whole point of Elijah’s ministry was to restore Israel, the people of God. The whole point of the book James wrote was to restore the people of God.
 1. This is true in the historical narrative in 1 Kings.
 2. This is true in the prophetic writings of Malachi:

“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and rules that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.
*Behold, I will send you **Elijah** the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction.”* (Malachi 4:4-6)

5:18 – “Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit.

2532 [e]	3825 [e]	4336 [e]	2532 [e]	3588 [e]	3772 [e]	5205 [e]	1325 [e]	2532 [e]	3588 [e]	1093 [e]	985 [e]	3588 [e]		
kai	palin	proseuxato	kai	ho	ouranos	hyeton	edoken	kai	hē	gē	eblastēsen	ton		
18	καὶ	πάλιν	<u>προσηύξατο</u>	,	καὶ	ὁ	οὐρανὸς	ἔδωκεν	,	καὶ	ἡ	γῆ	ἐβλάστησεν	τὸν
	And	again	he prayed		and	the	heaven	rain	gave	and	the	earth	produced	the
	Conj	Adv	V-AIM-3S		Conj	Art-NMS	N-NMS	N-AMS	V-AIA-3S	Conj	Art-NFS	N-NFS	V-AIA-3S	Art-AMS

2590 [e]	846 [e]
karpon	autēs
καρπὸν	αὐτῆς
fruit	of it
N-AMS	PPro-GF3S

1. Like Elijah rebuked Ahab and northern Israel, James’s letter has rebuked his readers.
2. Like Elijah’s confrontation led to national repentance and obedience, James here assumes his letter will bring about repentance and obedience.
 - a. Confession
 - b. Prayer
 - c. Restoration

5:19 – “My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back,

80 [e]	1473 [e]	1437 [e]	5100 [e]	1722 [e]	4771 [e]	4105 [e]	575 [e]	3588 [e]	225 [e]	2532 [e]	1994 [e]	5100 [e]	846 [e]				
Adelphoi	mou	ean	tis	en	hymīn	planēthē	apo	tēs	alētheias	kai	epistrepsē	tis	auton				
19	Ἀδελφοί	μου	,	εἰάν	τις	ἐν	ὑμῖν	<u>πλανηθῆ</u>	ἀπὸ	τῆς	ἀληθείας	,	καὶ	ἐπιστρέψῃ	τις	αὐτόν	,
	Brothers	of Me		if	anyone	among	you	might wander	from	the	truth		and	should bring back	someone	him	
	N-VMP	PPro-G1S		Conj	IPro-NMS	Prep	PPro-D2P	V-ASP-3S	Prep	Art-GFS	N-GFS		Conj	V-ASA-3S	IPro-NMS	PPro-AM3S	

1. “wanders” or “should stray” – *planethe* –
 - a. the English word for “planet” comes from this Greek word because planets in the sky do not appear to follow the fixed pattern of the stars. The planets appear to “wander”, but are actually following a different orbit.
 - b. Here it is used in the passive it has the idea of being led astray or deceived.
 - c. The word can also mean go astray on one’s own accord.
2. “If” is in the third-class condition meaning James does not know “if” anyone has done this: wandered off, wandered off because they were deceived, wandered off because they did so intentionally

5:20 – “let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

1097 [e]	3754 [e]	3588 [e]	1994 [e]	268 [e]	1537 [e]	4106 [e]	3598 [e]	846 [e]	4982 [e]	5590 [e]	846 [e]	1537 [e]
ginōsketō	hoti	ho	epistrepsas	hamartōlon	ek	planēs	hodou	autou	sōsei	psychēn	autou	ek
20 γινώσκέτω*	ὅτι	ὁ	ἐπιστρέψας	ἁμαρτωλὸν	ἐκ	πλάνης	ὁδοῦ	αὐτοῦ	σώσει	ψυχὴν	αὐτοῦ	ἐκ
let him know	that	the [one]	having brought back	a sinner	from	[the] error	of the way	of him	will save	the soul	of him	from
V-PMA-3S	Conj	Art-NMS	V-APA-NMS	Adj-AMS	Prep	N-GFS	N-GFS	PPro-GM3S	V-FIA-3S	N-AFS	PPro-GM3S	Prep

2288 [e]	2532 [e]	2572 [e]	4128 [e]	266 [e]
thanatou	kai	kalypsei	plēthos	hamartiōn
θανάτου	καὶ	καλύψει	πλήθος	ἁμαρτιῶν .
death	and	will cover over	a multitude	of sins
N-GMS	Conj	V-FIA-3S	N-ANS	N-GFP

1. Proverbs 10:12 –
“Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses.”
2. 1 Peter 4:8 says the same:
“Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.”
3. “wandering” – *planes* – means “a wandering”. And is used to say figuratively “deceit”, “delusion”, “error”, “sin”. The readers of this letter are identified here as having “wandered”
 - a. James 1:16 – “Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers.”
 - b. James 1:22 – “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
 - c. James 4:8 – “Cleanse your hands, **you sinners**, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”
4. Like Israel in Elijah’s day, these readers are likely suffering for their life in darkness since they have been deceived by the world:
 - a. “lacks wisdom”
 - b. “double minded”
 - c. “this person’ religion is worthless”
 - d. “have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”
 - e. “So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”
 - f. “For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.”