

## **James Chapter Five and Healing**

1. I want to teach three problem passages found in Jam 5:14-16. Many have wondered what the half-brother of Jesus meant. These passages need categorical treatment due to their specialized application.
2. The passages are often applied to every kind of sickness. They are not to be so applied.
3. Certainly as Church Age believers we are to pray for the sick. There is precious little Scripture to document this age old and trusted principle. But when all Scripture is analyzed, such an exhortation is clearly taught. Doubtless we are better off healthy, so why would we not pray for the health of our friends, family and even enemies.
4. Keep in mind there are times when it is God's will for us to be sick. We earlier noted where Paul was said to be "made strong" because of attacks permitted against him by satanic forces.
5. Let's first see how the problem passages are translated in the KJV.

### **KJV**

Jam 5:14 Is any sick among you? 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:

Jam 5:15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Jam 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

5.1 James is an early book written in about A.D. 47. It is most likely (along with Galatians) one of the earliest books written. As we interpret this passage we must repeatedly remind ourselves that the gift of Apostleship (and the powers related thereto) were extant.

5.2 All of this is important given the fact the setting is "the Interim Age" when the gift of healing abounded. Clearly we have a case where the "authenticating gift" of healing is ineffective. This fact alone creates doubt concerning the general application of Jam 5:14-16 to ordinary sickness. The sickness in view is not an illness that will respond to an apostle's gift of healing.

5.3 James is in charge of many pastors (he was responsible for more than 200 Christian churches in and around Jerusalem) therefore, when he speaks of elders he is referring to men responsible for various local churches in the city. Each one may from time to time have to deal with an anti-authority congregante besieged with an incurable malady.

5.4 There is strong evidence that the context of Jam 5:14-16 relates to a sin similar to the sin-unto-death—a very painful and perhaps even serious illness.

5.5 Let's look at the recovery procedure. First, the one suffering is to receive an anointing with oil. An anointing in this case is a symbol of authority recognition.

5.6 Oil was often used by the early church in ceremonies such as ordination of pastors and deacons to show unity with reference to the sanctioning. It is similar to the laying on of hands where all the brethren in a local church are of one accord and recognize a man's gift.

5.7 After the anointing of the offending congregante he is to then to go to his spiritual authority where the prayer of faith offered by his pastor-teacher is said to result in a healing. This explains the phrase "confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another that you may be healed."

5.8 Let's review what we have just learned:

- the offending congregante submits to an anointing,
- the congregante acknowledges the authority of his God ordained teacher and confesses his "sin" of rebellion to his pastor-teacher,
- the spiritual authority likewise accepts the congregante's act of contrition, and the two pray together,
- thus there is a public reconciliation,
- and the illness is removed.

5.9 Let me provide an expanded translation of Jam 5:14-16.

#### **Expanded Translation**

**Jam 5:14 Are there those among you who are sick because of a rejection of their spiritual leader? If such is the case they should first seek an anointing of oil in the presence of the church body and thus make for a public display of yielding to God's man.**

**Jam 5:15 As a result of the offending church member's submission to his God appointed authority; the apostle will then pray for the removal of the "sin" and the resultant illness will be removed.**

**Jam 5:16 Therefore, each sinning congregante must confess his sin of rebellion to his local pastor-teacher and the two should pray together so that the offending congregante might be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.**