

Ascending Mount Horeb

- *Elijah was an ordinary man with extraordinary faith. “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.” (James 5:16b-18).*
- *Elijah is an example for us to emulate. He prayed with great faith and conviction and saw the impossible become possible. When we consecrate our lives to Jesus and walk by faith in His righteousness we can pray with unshakeable confidence that God hears and answers our prayers because “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”*
- *Elijah was a servant of God but those who have put their faith in Christ have become sons and daughters of God!*
- *Prayers that avail much and prevail are from the heart as described by the words “effective, fervent.” The Greek word translated as “effective, fervent” means “mighty to show forth its power.” Fervent prayer does not indicate the loudness of our voice or the intensifying of our emotions. Fervent prayer conveys a deep desire and stirring in our hearts to see God’s will done. Effectual fervent prayer indicates a deep commitment to pray until we see the fulfillment of God’s will no matter what it costs us personally.*
- *Three of the main reasons why Christians don’t pray are:*
- *1. We think our prayers are ineffective and God will not actually answer.*
- *2. There is sin in our life. “Prayer will make a man cease from sin just as sin will entice a man to cease from prayer.” (John Bunyon).*
- *3. We are apathetic to seeing God’s will done on the earth as it is already being done in Heaven. We are more preoccupied in pleasing our own self-centred desires than being concerned with the plight of others in the world around us.*
- *What motivated Elijah was not his desire to prove he was someone special but to turn the hearts of Israel back to God.*
- *Elijah had so much faith in God and he was so passionate to see Israel return to God that he was able to pray and declare that it would not rain for three and a half years in Israel. His faith in God was so strong that he prayed a second time that the drought would supernaturally end although not a drop of rain had fallen on Israel for the past three and a half years.*

- *We may be tempted to think that Elijah was some super spiritual person who was never plagued with doubts and fears. However, Elijah had the same struggles and inner conflicts to deal with as we do today. “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours.” (James 5:17).*
- *As we study the life of Elijah we will notice his struggles with fear and depression. We will also learn how God helped him to overcome his natural weaknesses to complete the ministry God had given him.*
- *Elijah’s name sets the tone for his ministry and his life. Elijah’s name means “My God is Jehovah.” Elijah’s main goal in life was to prove to Israel that the Lord was God and that they should fully turn to Him and trust only in Him.*
- *We can clearly see Elijah’s zeal for God and his faith in God when he declared boldly before Ahab, the king of Israel, that the land of Israel would experience a total drought and not even one drop of rain would fall according to the word that the Lord had given him. “And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the LORD God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.”” (1 Kings 17:1).*
- *The drought was a supernatural sign from God to convey at least three things to Israel.*
- *First, for Israel to recognize Elijah’s message was from God.*
- *Second, to convict Israel that they had sinned by departing from the living God and serving idols.*
- *Third, to cause Israel to recognize that the Lord God was sovereign and that they should repent and turn back to Him.*
- *Surprisingly, even after Israel experienced a complete drought for three and a half years, along with all the hardships, losses, and destruction that accompany a drought, they refused to acknowledge their sins. Nor did they repent and turn back to God for forgiveness and restoration.*
- *After three and a half years of drought God asked Elijah to present himself before Ahab as the next step to help the Israelites repent and be restored back to God. “And it came to pass after many days that 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.”” (1 Kings 18:1).*
- *The drought reflected God’s judgment and the rains that would end the drought reflected God’s mercy. Israel had a choice. They could repent and receive God’s mercy or they could harden their hearts and experience more of God’s judgment.*
- *When God revealed Himself to Moses He first declared that He was merciful, gracious, and tender hearted to those who turn to Him. “And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and*

abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin.” (*Exodus 34:6-7a*).

- *In Isaiah 66:2 God revealed His tenderness even though He is also Almighty God who created everything. “For all those things My hand has made, And all those things exist,” Says the LORD. “But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word.”” God’s tenderness toward those who humble themselves before Him is repeated in Psalm 147:6. “The LORD lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground.”*
- *Elijah’s boldness and confidence in God is seen as he appeared before Ahab to declare the word of the Lord and confront Ahab’s sin and rebellion. “Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, “Is that you, O troubler of Israel?” And he answered, “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have, in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals.”” (*1 Kings 18:17-18*).*
- *Elijah’s motivation was not to condemn Ahab, but to see him repent and turn to the Lord.*
- *Ahab blamed Elijah for the drought and sought to kill him. However, Elijah was not swayed in the least by Ahab’s threats. He remained obedient to God’s word as he boldly presented himself to Ahab. Elijah’s love for the Lord and for Israel gave him the boldness to confront Ahab and Israel.*
- *Elijah was so bold that he even rebuked the king. “I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house have.” Then Elijah commanded Ahab to gather all the prophets of Baal together and Ahab actually obeyed him! ““Now therefore, send and gather all Israel to me on Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, and the four hundred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's table.” So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel.” (*1 Kings 18:19-20*).*
- *Once all the prophets of Baal have been gathered, Elijah posed a question to Ahab and all of the people of Israel. “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” (*1 Kings 18:21a*). Elijah challenged them to decide who was God and who they would follow. Israel had never totally turned away from the Lord but lived in compromise by having one foot in the Lord’s camp and the other foot in the camp of Baal worship.*
- *Israel’s silence spoke volumes. “But the people answered him not a word.” (*1 Kings 18:21b*). They were double-minded and did not want to take a clear stand for either the Lord or for Baal. They wanted to hedge their bets and have it both ways.*
- *The apostle James warned that double-minded Christians will be very disappointed because they will fail to receive from the Lord and their lives will be filled with*

instability. “For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.” (*James 1:7-8*).

- *Elijah presented himself before all of Israel and stated that although there were four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, he alone stood for the Lord, the true and living God of Israel.* “Then Elijah said to the people, “I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men.”” (*1 Kings 18:22*). *Elijah demonstrated his boldness for the Lord and Israel’s unfaithfulness to the Lord.*
- *Next Elijah proposed to Israel one of the boldest challenges imaginable to reveal who truly is God.* “Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other bull, and lay it on the wood, but put no fire under it. Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who answers by fire, He is God.”” (*1 Kings 18:23-24a*).
- *When the people of Israel heard Elijah’s challenge their response was immediate.* “So all the people answered and said, “It is well spoken.”” (*1 Kings 18:24b*). *Who had ever heard of such a challenge before? The people were no longer lethargic but enthusiastically responded to having Elijah’s question answered once and for all.* “Who is God? Either the Lord or Baal.”
- *Elijah gave the prophets of Baal the first chance to prove that Baal was God. From nine in the morning until noon they called on Baal to send fire down from Heaven. Elijah taunted them as their frustration grew when their god failed to answer.* “And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, “Cry aloud, for he is a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened.” So they cried aloud, and cut themselves, as was their custom, with knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them.” (*1 Kings 18:27-28*).
- *The hysterical rantings and bloodletting of the prophets of Baal continued another three hours until the time of the evening sacrifice.* “And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice. But there was no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.” (*1 Kings 18:29*). *The prophets of Baal were defeated and exhausted. There was nothing more for them to say. Their god had not answered!*
- *Now it was Elijah’s turn. In an act reflecting the Lord’s tender love for Israel he beckoned the people of Israel to draw close.* “Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” So all the people came near to him.” (*1 Kings 18:30a*).
- *As the people gathered close to Elijah and watched, he began to quietly, gently, and methodically repair the altar of the Lord that the people had neglected.* “And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down.” (*1 Kings 18:30b*).

- *First, Elijah carefully chose twelve stones, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, reminding Israel how the Lord had lovingly chosen them from all the nations of the earth and gathered them together to be His people and His special treasure. “And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, “Israel shall be your name. Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD.”” (1 Kings 18:31-32a).*
- *Next Elijah dug a trench around the altar signifying how the Lord had surrounded Israel with both His love and His protection. “and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed.” (1 Kings 18:32b).*
- *With the people watching, Elijah carefully and methodically placed the wood on the altar and cut the bull in pieces and placed the pieces on the wood. This was a reminder of their promise to serve the Lord. It was also a prophetic picture of the ultimate sacrifice that God would make to redeem mankind from their sins. “And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood” (1 Kings 18:33a).*
- *Astonishingly, Elijah commanded the people to pour water on the altar until not only the wood and the sacrifice were completely drenched, but the water overflowed and filled the trench. ““Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.” Then he said, “Do it a second time,” and they did it a second time; and he said, “Do it a third time,” and they did it a third time. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water.” (1 Kings 18:33b-35).*
- *Unlike the 450 prophets of Baal who desperately tried to get their god to answer by fire, Elijah’s actions made it even more difficult and unlikely to have the offering consumed by fire—he had thoroughly doused it with water.*
- *However, there was a much more significant meaning to Elijah commanding the people to pour water on the altar until it was thoroughly soaked. The water represented Israel’s rebellion and opposition to the ways of the Lord just as water would hinder the fire from consuming the sacrifice. Elijah had the people pour the water on the altar and did not do so himself, because it was their rebellion that was opposing the Lord. Exactly twelve waterpots of water were poured on the altar representing the rebellion of the twelve tribes of Israel!*
- *Elijah’s effectual fervent prayer was totally unlike the frenzied bloodletting and hysteria of the 450 prophets of Baal. Elijah simply approached the Lord and made his request known. “And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, “LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.” (1 Kings 18:36-37).*

- *The Lord's answer was both immediate and overwhelming. There was no question that the Lord heard and answered Elijah's prayer. "Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench." (1 Kings 18:38).*
- *The response of the people was also immediate and overwhelming as they spontaneously acknowledged the Lord as God and fell down to worship Him wholeheartedly. "Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!" (1 Kings 18:39).*
- *Then Israel did something that would have been unthinkable just a few short hours before. They heeded Elijah's words, turned away from Baal and executed the 450 prophets of Baal in order to cleanse the land of Baal worship. "And Elijah said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there." (1 Kings 18:40).*
- *As the icing on the cake, so to speak, Elijah pronounced that the 3 1/2 year drought would end and the Lord would pour out His mercies and blessings upon Israel. "Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of abundance of rain." (1 Kings 18:41).*
- *We might be tempted to think that the story ends with 1 Kings, Chapter 18, as Israel returned to the Lord. However, the story does not end with Israel serving God wholeheartedly and Elijah enjoying a fruitful ministry for the rest of his life leading Israel in their service to God. Chapter 19 takes a sad and unexpected twist. Israel almost immediately fell back under the influence of the wicked Queen Jezebel and her worship of Baal.*
- *Jezebel, upon hearing of the death of the prophets of Baal, sent a message threatening the life of Elijah. "And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." (1 Kings 19:1-2).*
- *Elijah's response is both surprising and out of character. Upon hearing Jezebel's threats he was filled with fear and fled for his life. "And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there." (1 Kings 19:3). Elijah who always exhibited fearless and bold devotion to God suddenly succumbed to fear.*
- *After Elijah fled from Jezebel, he became totally despondent and asked God to end his life. "But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" (1 Kings 19:4).*

- *The source of Elijah's despondency is not that Jezebel had threatened to kill him or that he was afraid to die. The source of his despair is summed up by his words: "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!" Elijah had been so certain that Israel would return wholeheartedly to the Lord after seeing the power of God demonstrated so miraculously. When they didn't respond he fell into a deep dark pit of despair.*
- *Elijah thought he had totally failed and that his ministry was washed-up and there was nothing more he could possibly do to change the hearts of Israel, so he said, "It is enough!" He had hoped he would be the prophet who would succeed where all the previous prophets had been unsuccessful, but his hopes were dashed and he thought, "I am no better than my fathers!" He felt his life had no more meaning or purpose.*
- *The source of Elijah's discouragement was that he misunderstood a number of things about the calling God had given him and about God Himself.*
- *First, God had not called him to be successful but to be faithful and obedient. Whether or not Israel responded to the Lord was not Elijah's responsibility. The Lord had called him to be His faithful witness and messenger and Elijah had done so with flying colours!*
- *It's our responsibility and privilege to pray—but leave the results to God. After we've done our part, let God do His part.*
- *Second, there were still things the Lord wished to teach Elijah. Elijah needed to learn, mature, and grow in regard to his knowledge of God and his relationship with God.*
- *Life is not just about serving the Lord but growing in our relationship with Him. Our lives have meaning far beyond just service to God. It's of greater importance to develop our fellowship with God and learn to love Him more.*
- *Third, Elijah needed to realize that he hadn't failed and his ministry would ultimately result in a revival and a turning to God that the world had never before seen.*
- *We must not judge the impact of our lives simply based on the outward or immediate circumstances, but trust God with the things we cannot see and the eternal things that are not yet apparent.*
- *For Elijah to have a greater revelation of God and to come into an even deeper relationship with God, he needed to take a journey to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God. "And the angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb, the mountain of God." (1 Kings 19:7-8).*

- *When he arrived at Mount Horeb, he climbed the mountain and it was there that he shared with the Lord the depth of the despair and hopelessness that crushed his heart. “And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and He said to him, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” So he said, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life.”” (1 Kings 19:9-10).*
- *The Lord did not rebuke Elijah for being despondent but instead told him to stand on the mountain where he would receive an answer from the Lord Himself! “Then He said, “Go out, and stand on the mountain before the LORD.” (1 Kings 19:11a).*
- *“And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.” (1 Kings 19:11b-12). The Lord was not found in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in a still small voice.*
- *God was the source of the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, but the presence of God is found in that still small voice—that place of intimacy and prayer.*
- *Elijah had seen the power of God but now he was going to hear the voice of God in a clearer way than he had ever had before—a still small voice heard on Mount Horeb.*
- *What does Mount Horeb represent? The name Horeb means “desolate, solitude.” It represents the place where we leave all the cares, disappointments, pains, problems, busyness, and distractions of life behind and come away to hear from God. Horeb can represent our prayer closet and our devotional time where we spend time studying His Word, sharing our hearts with our heavenly Father, and hearing from His Holy Spirit.*
- *It is significant that Elijah heard from the Lord on Mount Horeb, because the Bible also refers to Mount Horeb as Mount Sinai. Some 63 chapters of the Old Testament are devoted to events that took place at Mount Sinai / Mount Horeb.*
- *It was at the base of Mount Sinai that Moses had his first encounter with the Lord at the burning bush and where God instructed him to return to Egypt in order to lead Israel from bondage to freedom. (Exodus, Chapter 3).*
- *It was at Mount Sinai that Israel spent 11 months soon after they left Egypt. It was at Mount Sinai that they complained against God because they had no water and Moses struck the rock and water came forth. (Exodus 17:6). Moses ascended Mount Sinai where he received the Law as well as all the detailed instructions of how to construct the Tabernacle. (Exodus 19-31). It was also the place where Israel celebrated the first Passover a year after they had left Egypt. (Numbers, Chapter 9).*

- *It was at the base of Mount Sinai that the people heard the voice of the Lord and responded by saying they did not want to hear God's voice directly. "Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.""* (Exodus 20:19).
- *It was at the base of Mount Sinai that the people grew impatient as Moses spent forty days on the mountain with the Lord and they forsook God by building a golden calf. (Exodus, Chapter 32).*
- *It was at Mount Sinai where Israel saw God's power but refused to hear His voice. However, Mount Sinai was also the place where Moses ascended and learned to commune with God face to face as a man speaks to his friend. (Exodus 33:11)*
- *Israel stayed at the base of the mountain and saw God's mighty acts but Moses spent time with God and learned of His ways. "He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel." (Psalm 103:7).*
- *Israel had an encounter with the power of God but Moses had an encounter with the Person of God. Israel saw His acts but Moses knew His ways.*
- *Every believer comes to Mount Horeb and has an encounter with the Lord. Some stay at the base of the mountain and never enter into a deeper relationship with God. Others ascend the mountain and abide in His presence through prayer and exploring His Word and become His friend. It is in the secret place of our prayer closet that we get to fully know and trust the Lord.*
- *The Lord spoke to the very root of Elijah's disappointments. "Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; and when you arrive, anoint Hazael as king over Syria. Also you shall anoint Jehu the son of Nimshi as king over Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint as prophet in your place. It shall be that whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, Elisha will kill. Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him.""* (1 Kings 19:15-18).
- *First, God reassured Elijah that his ministry had not been in vain. God had a plan for dealing with Israel and even after Elijah departed, the ministry he had been given would continue—"Elisha ... you shall anoint as prophet in your place."*
- *It was on Mount Horeb where Elijah finally realized that he had not failed and that God had not failed. Elijah understood that God would continue to bring judgment on Israel until God's purposes were fulfilled. Second, God had preserved a faithful remnant of seven thousand who had not bowed their knee to Baal or paid homage to his image. The situation was not as bleak as Elijah imagined.*

- *Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb was not a sign that he did not have enough faith. It was an indication that his faith was strong enough for him to make the journey to Horeb. Where men of lesser faith would have abandoned God in the face of such discouraging circumstances, Elijah's faith gave him the strength to turn to God in the midst of his depression and fear and hear from the Lord.*
- *Like Elijah, as we journey up to Mount Horeb we can take heart when we consider the perfection of God's ways and plans even though the circumstance around us may sometimes appear dismal. "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33).*
- *One outstanding question regarding Elijah is, "Why did God take Elijah alive up to Heaven?" The answer is because the ministry that God had given him was not complete and he is returning to prepare the way for Christ's return.*
- *John the Baptist was not Elijah incarnate but he was sent to be a prophetic representation of Elijah's ministry. "And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (Luke 1:16-17).*
- *It is also not without significance that on the mount of transfiguration the two people who Jesus conversed with regarding His imminent suffering, death, and resurrection were Elijah and Moses, the only two recorded to have communed with God on Mount Horeb! (Matthew 17:3; Mark 9:4).*
- *Revelation, Chapter 11, identifies two witnesses who will call the world to repentance during the first 3 ½ years of the Great Tribulation and usher in the wrath of God for the second 3 ½ years for those who reject Him. It seems to clearly indicate that one is Elijah and the second is possibly Moses.*

Revelation 11:3,6 (NKJV)

³ And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

⁶ These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

- *The signs of the two prophets in Revelation 11 are:*
- *1. The power to shut the heavens so there is no rainfall, reminiscent of Elijah.*
- *2. Power to turn water into blood and strike the earth with plagues reminiscent of Moses.*

Malachi 4:1-6 NKJV

¹“For behold, the day is coming, Burning like an oven, And all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,” Says the LORD of hosts, “That will leave them neither root nor branch.

² But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise With healing in His wings; And you shall go out And grow fat like stall-fed calves.

³ You shall trample the wicked, For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet On the day that I do this,” Says the LORD of hosts.

⁴ “Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, With the statutes and judgments.

⁵ Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

⁶ And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.”

- *Malachi, the last Old Testament prophet and his last prophecy, speak about Elijah coming and turning hearts back to the Lord. Elijah’s ministry was not a failure and in fact it is Elijah’s ministry that will usher in the greatest revival of all of mankind just prior to the Great Tribulation.*
- *Let us also ascend to Mount Horeb and commune with God, grow in our relationship with the Lord, and see His will fulfilled in our lives and the lives of those around us!*