

Growth Group Study - Breakthrough prayers - Elijah
Bible Readings: 1 Kings 18.16-39 & James 5.13-20
3 March 2019 – John Malcolm

If you were making a list of the top ten Old Testament stories - what would be on your list?

God will have spoken to each of us through different stories, which is at the top of your list and why?

Would Elijah make it on to your list? Why/why not?

Read 1 Samuel 8.6-9 & 1 Kings 16:30–33

What do these verses reveal about Israel's relationship with the kings?

(Perhaps someone in the group with an understanding of the history of the kings could summarise what happened to change Israel from a united kingdom with one king, into one which became divided and ultimately was conquered by other nations).

What did Ahab do that was so abhorrent to God?

Read 1 Kings 18:21

Why do you think the Canaanite gods held an attraction for the people of Israel?

Why might the people have been wavering rather than making a decision about who to serve?

Read 1 Kings 17:1 & 18.17-18

Why is Elijah's warning about drought a challenge to Baal as well as to Ahab?

How would a prolonged drought impact on the material prosperity of the king?

There is a saying in the Western world ... *its like the pot calling the kettle black*. How might this apply to Ahab when he accused Elijah of causing trouble?

Read 1 Kings 18.22-39

Describe the efforts of the prophets of Baal to have their god answer their prayers.

Why do you think Elijah had people douse his wood with water until it was saturated, and a pool of water formed around the offering?

How does Elijah's approach to prayer differ from that of the prophets of Baal?

Looking at verses 36-37 Elijah identified five specific things God's action would prove?

That you are ___ in Israel
I am your _____
I have done this at your _____
So people will know you _____ are God

And you are turning their _____ back again

When people were so fickle, wavering in their faith, why do you think God acted towards them with such grace? (Isaiah 65.1-3)

Read Habakkuk 2:19–20 & Isaiah 44.16-18

What does the bible teach about idols and how does that relate to prayers offered to idols?

Read 2 Cor 4.7 & James 5.13-18

According to James, who should pray?

Whose prayer is powerful and effective?

What does this reveal about Elijah?

Why do you think James points this out?

How would you explain the link between the prayer of an ordinary person and a righteous person – can we be both?

George Herbert, a poet and priest, described prayer as *Heaven in ordinary* (1593-1633). How might this be an image of our lives?

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:11

The minister stated, *true power, ultimate power lies with God. It is seen in creation, in the life of Jesus and in the miracle of salvation.*

How does prayer connect us to the power of God?

What might this mean for the young, the old, the exhausted, the weak, those near to God or those far from God?

For reflection

How might knowing Elijah was an ordinary person like ourselves inspire us to pray?