

**THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION**  
**James: A Sermonic Call Unto Practical Godliness**  
**Part IX: Godliness In Our Prayer Lives, James 5:13-20**  
**B. Godliness Relative To Praying For The "Sick" In James 5**  
**(James 5:14-15)**

**I. Introduction**

- A. The Roman Catholic Church claims James 5:14-15 institutes the alleged sacrament of Extreme Unction believed necessary for salvation, one where the priest performs a (a) **ritual** anointing of one (b) who is **near death** and (c) **prays** for (among other things) the **salvation** of his **soul**, Robert C. Broderick, ed., The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1987, p. 208; Loraine Boettner, Roman Catholicism, 1978, p. 189.
- B. Also, many Charismatics claim James 5:14-15 teaches physical healing by anointing with oil and prayer, Daniel R. Hayden, "Calling the Elders to Pray," Bibliotheca Sacra 138, July-September, 1981: 264.
- C. We examine James 5:14-15 to evaluate these beliefs, and to determine what the passage truly teaches:

**II. Godliness Relative To Praying For The "Sick" in James 5, James 5:14-15.**

- A. James 5:14-15 does **not address either** the alleged sacrament of **Extreme Unction or physical healing**:
  - 1. James 5:14-15 does not address the alleged sacrament of extreme unction (as follows):
    - a. The James 5:14 KJV word "anoint" is from the Greek word, *aleipsantes*, the **commonplace** term **RATHER THAN** the word, *chrismo* that refers to **ceremonial** anointing in **sacred** and **religious** contexts, Ibid., citing R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, 1950, p. 136-137.
    - b. Then, **nothing** in the context implies the afflicted one is **near death**, Ibid., p. 129. Rather, besides the issue of forgiveness (Jas. 5:15b), the focus is on **restoring** the believer's welfare, James 5:15a.
  - 2. James 5:14-15 does not address physical healing (as follows):
    - a. The word for "sick" (KJV) in James 5:14a is from the Greek word, *asthenei*, and though it is used in the Gospels for physical problems, in Acts and the Epistles it refers "to a weak faith or a weak conscience (cf. Acts 20:35; Rom. 6:19; 14:1; 1 Cor. 8:9-12." (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 834)
    - b. Then, the word for "sick" (KJV) in James 5:15a is the Greek term *kamnonta*, and it means "to be weary," Ibid. The only other passage where this word appears in the Greek New Testament is Hebrews 12:3, and there it "clearly emphasizes this same meaning" of being weary, Ibid.
    - c. Thus, "James is not referring to the bedfast . . . or the ill. Instead he wrote to those who had grown weary, who had become weak both morally and spiritually in the midst of suffering." (Ibid.)
  - 3. In summary, (a) the use of the common versus the religious term for anointing, (b) a lack of reference in the context to the afflicted one's being near death, (c) the words used that focus on spiritual versus physical needs and (d) refreshment versus the salvation of the soul means James 5:14-15 does **not** address **EITHER** the alleged sacrament of **Extreme Unction OR** even **physical healing!**
- B. Actually, these very observations help guide us to the correct interpretation of James 5:14-15 (as follows):
  - 1. Since James 5:14-15 addresses not the physically oppressed, but the spiritually hurting, and since its word for anointing refers to a common practice, not a ritual, James 5:14a urges spiritually oppressed believers to ask their church leaders to perform in their Hebrew cultural context "the common practice of using oil as a means of bestowing honor, refreshment, and grooming" on them, Ibid., citing Hayden, Loc. cit. [Hayden's article is in Dallas Theological Seminary's scholarly journal, Bibliotheca Sacra.]
  - 2. This act of rubbing oil on the despondent one's head was to be attended by intercessory prayer so that the oppressed might be restored to a balanced disposition in the inner man, Ibid., p. 835; James 5:14b.
  - 3. The intercessory prayer of the Church leaders would restore the afflicted one, and, if he had committed acts of sin that led to his afflicted state, they would be forgiven him as he thus repented, Jas. 5:15, Ibid.

**Lesson: James 5:14-15 does NOT institute the alleged sacrament of Extreme Unction NOR does it teach the ritual of anointing with oil to heal one physically! Rather, it directs a spiritually downcast believer to call for his church leaders to come and minister encouraging words and works within his cultural context along with intercessory prayer for his spiritual edification.**

**Application: May we then apply James 5:14-15 in the context it was given to enjoy God's real blessing!**