

# Prayer



Thy Kingdom Come

INTRODUCTION. . . . .	<u>1</u>
NOTABLE PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE.. . . .	<u>5</u>
Abraham for Sodom. . . . .	<u>5</u>
Jacob at Peniel.. . . .	<u>6</u>
David, when stopped by God from building the temple.. . . .	<u>7</u>
Solomon's dedication of the temple.. . . .	<u>9</u>
Jonah prayed unto his God out of the fish's belly.. . . .	<u>10</u>
Hezekiah's prayer unto the Lord. . . . .	<u>12</u>
For the sins of the people.. . . .	<u>14</u>
Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. . . . .	<u>15</u>
EXAMPLES OF OUR LORD'S PRAYER LIFE.. . . .	<u>17</u>
Solitary devotions. . . . .	<u>17</u>
All-night devotions. . . . .	<u>17</u>
UNWISE PRAYER. . . . .	<u>19</u>
Elijah flees to the wilderness.. . . .	<u>19</u>
Jonah's complaint to God. . . . .	<u>19</u>
UNIVERSAL NEED.. . . .	<u>20</u>
God is to be praised in the Kingdom. . . . .	<u>20</u>
Blessings promised. . . . .	<u>20</u>
POSTURE IN PRAYER. . . . .	<u>21</u>
Bowing. . . . .	<u>21</u>
Kneeling.. . . .	<u>21</u>
Raising ones hands. . . . .	<u>21</u>
Prostrating. . . . .	<u>21</u>
THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PRAYER. . . . .	<u>22</u>
The Lord promised the Holy Spirit that he would guide us. . . . .	<u>22</u>
The Holy Spirit will help us in our prayer. . . . .	<u>22</u>
PRAY TO GOD. . . . .	<u>23</u>
For enemies. . . . .	<u>23</u>
Without show. . . . .	<u>23</u>
The decree.. . . .	<u>23</u>
Of hypocrisy in prayer. . . . .	<u>23</u>
Peter's training vision. . . . .	<u>23</u>
With fasting. . . . .	<u>24</u>
Fasting. . . . .	<u>24</u>
THE POWER OF PRAYER.. . . .	<u>25</u>
General. . . . .	<u>25</u>
Dependant on faith. . . . .	<u>25</u>

Increased by self-denial.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>25</u></a>
Manifested in the Old Testament.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>25</u></a>
Unlimited to believers.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>25</u></a>
ACCEPTABLE TIME.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>26</u></a>
David.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>26</u></a>
A warning not to tempt God.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>26</u></a>
David prayed – God forgave.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>26</u></a>
David begs for relief.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>26</u></a>
Isaiah – gracious promise to the gentiles.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>26</u></a>
Paul – the conduct of the ministry.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>27</u></a>
DIRECT PRAYER TO GOD.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>28</u></a>
Against hypocrisy in prayer.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>28</u></a>
How to pray.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>28</u></a>
PRAYER REQUEST.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>29</u></a>
To a visitor.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>29</u></a>
Safety of travellers.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>29</u></a>
Esteem for Jerusalem.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>29</u></a>
God sends afflictions for good.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>29</u></a>
UNITED PRAYER.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>30</u></a>
The Jews in the latter days.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>30</u></a>
Zacharias and Elisabeth.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>30</u></a>
The Apostles unite in prayer.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>30</u></a>
CONDITIONS OF TRUE PRAYER.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>
Contrition.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>
A fake and a true fast.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>
God's requirements for blessing: prayer, and repentance . . . . .	<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>
Faith.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>
Heartfelt.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>
Obedience.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>
Righteousness.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>32</u></a>
PRAYER.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>33</u></a>
Prayer for the Church.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>33</u></a>
<u>Jesus</u> .. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>33</u></a>
Paul, for Israel's salvation.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>33</u></a>
The Church for the Church.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>33</u></a>
Prayer for wisdom.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>33</u></a>
Prayer heard.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>34</u></a>
David takes comfort in the fact that God hears him.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>34</u></a>
Though he were a son.... . . . .	<a href="#"><u>34</u></a>
Priceless.. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>34</u></a>

Prayer of righteousness. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>34</u></a>
Prayer sought. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>34</u></a>
Prayerfulness. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>34</u></a>
<b>INTERCESSORY. . . . .</b>	<a href="#"><u>36</u></a>
Renewed prosperity. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>36</u></a>
Substitution. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>36</u></a>
A sin not to pray. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>36</u></a>
God is a prayer-hearing God. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>36</u></a>
The stopping of the pestilence. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>37</u></a>
Paul requests their prayers. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>37</u></a>
<b>CRYING OUT TO THE LORD. . . . .</b>	<a href="#"><u>38</u></a>
The Egyptians place the Israelites into bondage. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>38</u></a>
Moses comforts the murmuring Israelites. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>38</u></a>
God uses a prophetess against the Canaanites. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>38</u></a>
Israel rebuked by a prophet. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>39</u></a>
Repentance. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>39</u></a>
Prayer with confidence. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>39</u></a>
The psalmist's hope in prayer. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>39</u></a>
The Lord's eternal love. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>39</u></a>
Temple order restored. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>40</u></a>
Bartimaeus healed. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>40</u></a>
<b>SEEKING GUIDANCE. . . . .</b>	<a href="#"><u>41</u></a>
<b>ANSWERED PRAYER. . . . .</b>	<a href="#"><u>42</u></a>
Bitter waters made sweet. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>42</u></a>
The reversed sundial. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>42</u></a>
Othniel delivers Israel. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>42</u></a>
Samuel. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>44</u></a>
Samuel is dedicated. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>44</u></a>
Philistines defeated. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>44</u></a>
Freed from foes. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>45</u></a>
Angelic deliveries. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>45</u></a>
Delayed responses. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>46</u></a>
Prayer and fasting for protection. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>46</u></a>
The continual infilling of the Spirit. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>46</u></a>
<b>UNANSWERED PRAYER. . . . .</b>	<a href="#"><u>48</u></a>
Condemnation. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>48</u></a>
Despising the law. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>48</u></a>
Disobedience. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>48</u></a>
Iniquity. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>49</u></a>
Instability. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>50</u></a>
Stubbornness. . . . .	<a href="#"><u>50</u></a>

## INTRODUCTION.

Prayer, which categories do you fit into.

- 1 When you wake up,
  - a. “Good Lord, its morning!”
  - b. “Good morning Lord.”
- 2 “Bless you”. Is that a blessing on the germs that have been spread, or a blessing on any who were in the path of projectile germs?
- 3 “Bless you”. From guest and host to each other for the fellowship you just experienced.
- 4 “Lord, bless this food to us”. Clearly stated when at home before meals, yet often whispered or omitted when at restaurants.
- 5 “Help” when in trouble, or “Well, I could call upon God, but I think I can manage OK”.

Biblically, prayer is a talk between God in heaven and the people on this earth. Adam and Eve’s expulsion from the Garden of Eden came through the sin of disobedience, when prayer became the medium of communication between man and God.

Thus prayer is an exchange that takes place between two people. It permits man to obtain an understanding whom God is.

If we are to accept that our life on earth is probationary, then a regular talk time between man and God is a definite requirement.

This enables man to have a greater communion and understanding of God, and His will for man in this life.

There are more than eight hundred references to prayer in the Bible, some are duplicates of the same item, and many others have the same theme.

Israel, as a nation, was born out of prayer.

- 1 After Enos was born, men began to call upon the name of the LORD, Genesis 4:26.
- 2 Abraham heard God's call, Genesis 12:1–3.
- 3 God heard the cries of the Hebrew children, Exodus 3:7.
- 4 Moses interceded for Israel, Exodus 32:11–13,
- 5 By prayer Joshua discerned sin in the community, Joshua 7:6–9, but was tricked when he did not discern God's opinion by prayer, Joshua

9,

6 God also spoke through the Judges as a deliverer of His people when they called out to Him for deliverance.

Just how important prayer was during the Law Age?

1 God worked miracles through the prayers of Elijah and Elisha, 1 Kings 17:19–22 and 18:20–40.

2 Jeremiah's talks and intercessions with God, frequently voiced a reservation and frustration, Jeremiah 1 and 20:7–18.

3 The Psalms teach us a lot on a variety of prayer subjects,

a. Seek such things as communion, Psalm 63,

b. Protection, Psalm 57,

c. Vindication, Psalm 107,

d. Healing, Psalm 6.

Psalm 86 provides an excellent pattern for prayer.

4 For the Babylonian exiles who were denied access to a Temple, a daily routine of prayer was very important, Daniel 6:10.

The Church came through the intercessory prayer of our Lord. John 17.

The Bible gives us seven clear directions on how to approach God, and to get answers,

1 Pray to the Father, John 16:23,

2 In the Name of Jesus, John 14:12–15,

3 By the Holy Spirit, Romans 8:26,

4 Understanding your rights for what you are praying for, 1 Corinthians 14:14–15,

5 Ensuring the prayer is in harmony with the Word of God, John 15:7,

6 Along with a liberal helping of faith, James 1:6.

The Gospels promote the following points.

1 Jesus displayed a regular and intense prayer life, Matthew 6:5 and 14:23,

2 Jesus always prayed at crucial times,

a. Seeking which of the disciples to appoint, Mark 3:13,

b. Their mission, Mark 6:30–32,

c. At the transfiguration, Mark 9:2,

3 Jesus was guided by the Holy Spirit, Luke 3:22, 4:1,14,18, and 10:21,

4 Jesus sometimes prayed aloud for the benefit of those present, John 11:41–42.

Although Matthew, 6:9–13 places the Lord's Prayer teaching during the Sermon on the Mount, it is significant that Luke, 11:2–4, records that the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray after watching Him pray, Luke 11:1.

It is also essential to understand and remember that Jesus' teaching was how to pray, not what to pray.

We can view the Lord's Prayer in the following manner,

1. Petition prayer,
  - a. We pray that God will bring about His purpose in the world.
  - b. By praying in this manner we request God to meet the physical and spiritual needs of His disciples.

It is noteworthy that the petitions come in this order,

  - a. God's vindication,
  - b. Fulfilment for the Disciples
2. Community prayer
  - a. "Our Father,"
  - b. "Give us..."
  - c. "Forgive us..."
  - d. "as we ...."
  - e. "Cause us,"
  - f. "Deliver us."

Jesus corrected some abuses and misunderstandings regarding prayer.

1. While Jesus taught that public prayer is not a medium with which to impress others, He never rejected group prayers, Matthew 6:5–6.
2. Jesus also denounced long drawn out prayers that tried to manipulate God.

Within the Hebrew thought and ideology, they mystically linked the name of a person to that person's character, therefore, they regard any prayer in 'Jesus' Name' as a prayer that is seeking His Will, and the person seeking His Will was prepared to be submissive to His Authority, John 14:13 and 1 John 5:14.

"And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves", Matthew 21:13.

We could well paraphrase the above verse as 'And say unto them, My house shall be called the house of prayer; ye have made it a den of thieves, because you steal my time and authority from Me to do your own

will'.

The study is as follows

Notable Prayers of The Bible

Examples of Our Lord's Prayer Life

Unwise Prayer

Universal Need

Posture in Prayer

The Holy Spirit and Prayer

Pray to God

the Power of Prayer

Acceptable Time

Direct Prayer to God

Prayer Request

United Prayer

Conditions of True Prayer

Prayer

Intercessory

Crying Out to the Lord Seeking Guidance, Judges 1:1

Answered Prayer

Unanswered Prayer



## NOTABLE PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE.

Note what you will find within these prayers,

A Name Change.	God's Righteousness	Prayer Heard
Crying to God.	God's Promises	Repentance.
Deliverance	God's Blessings	Righteousness.
Divine Justice	Humility	Secret Prayer.
Divine Forbearance	Intercession.	Sin Separates.
Divine Faithfulness.	Man's Righteousness	Solitude.
Divine Appearances.	One God.	Spiritual Adoption
Divine Ways.	Pleasing God.	Spiritual Power
Dreams.	Prayer Answered.	Spiritual Discernment
God of Truth	Prayer.	Uprightness.
God's Mercy.		

Abraham for Sodom. Genesis 18:23–32.

In these verses the following aspects are evident,

- 1 Prayer.
- 2 Man's Righteousness.
- 3 Intercession.
- 4 Divine Justice.
- 5 God's Righteousness.
- 6 God's Mercy.
- 7 Divine Forbearance.

The acts of Creation took place about 4000 BC, with God sending the flood some one thousand six hundred years later, about 2420 BC.

The meeting between Abraham and God took place some 550 years after the flood, about 1868 BC.

Over a period, families had started going their own ways. Some 550 years after the Flood, the thinking of two men from the one family is absolutely poles apart.

One is fearful of God, and voices his concern for other people, while the other had to be forced away from an impending judgement by two angels.

This is the first recorded prayer in the Bible, and Abraham is praying for a city.

Two points become obvious here,

- 1 Abraham obviously knew of Sodom's reputation,
- 2 He was aware that very little preaching had been done there, Although Abraham failed to save Sodom as a unit, he obviously had Lot and his family in mind, and that he had assumed that Lot would have drawn others to God as well.

Another feature of Abraham that shows through in this prayer is his trust in God's graciousness. Abraham starts with the number fifty. When God did not rebuff him for reducing the number by fives, he then tried reducing his request by tens.

Since there were not ten righteous people in Sodom, God delivered Lot and his family in keeping with His Word, and then destroyed the city.

Jacob at Peniel. Genesis 32:24–32.

In these verses the following aspects are evident,

- 1 Solitude.
- 2 Prayer.
- 3 Secret Prayer.
- 4 A Name Change.
- 5 Spiritual Power.
- 6 Man's Righteousness.
- 7 Intercession.
- 8 Divine Justice.
- 9 God's Righteousness.
- 10 God's Mercy.
- 11 Divine Forbearance.

About 1715, some 150 years after Abraham had interceded for Sodom, Jacob, Abraham's grandson was about to return home to attempt a reconciliation between himself and his brother Esau.

The following facts illuminate Jacob's greatest test and finest hour for us at this point,

- 1 He had been absent for 20 years,
- 2 He still had a fear of Esau,
- 3 He remembered the tensions from when he fled from home,
- 4 In his distress, he had learned to turn to God,

- 5 His experience at Peniel had prepared him to enter Esau's presence victoriously,
- 6 He was no longer Jacob, the 'supplanter' and schemer,
- 7 He had an assurance from God of a victory by faith,
- 8 He had 'prevailed' against the Angel,
- 9 The name change from Jacob to Israel translated 'contends with God'.

Whether Jacob had crossed the river at this time is not clear, but the fact that the Angel dislocated Jacob's hip by a 'touch' of would suggest that the Angel could have defeated Jacob at anytime, and was a part of the Godhead.

The intensity of Jacob's prayer is compared with wrestling, for nothing requires more energy and unceasing effort than wrestling. God allowed Himself to be detained by Jacob, although He wished to depart before daybreak that Jacob did not see His Face. To get away, the Angel did two things,

- 1 He blessed Jacob with a name change,
- 2 He crippled him (whether temporarily or for the rest of his life is not stated).

The limp Jacob endured proved beyond doubt of that it had not been a dream.

In response to Jacob's question for the Angel's Name, the Angel's response is that Jacob was well aware who He was.

David, when stopped by God from building the temple. 2 Samuel 7:18-29.

In these verses the following aspects are evident,

- 1 Prayer.
- 2 Humility.
- 3 Divine Faithfulness.
- 4 One God.
- 5 Deliverance.
- 6 Spiritual Adoption.
- 7 God of Truth.
- 8 God's Promises.
- 9 God's Blessings.

This prayer by David, thought to be dated about 1015, placing it nearly 1010 years before our Lord's Birth, promotes David's full affection of his

God.

David ascribes his position and life, his sins and their subsequent forgiveness by God, to the free grace of God.

David prays for the accomplishment of God's revealed will, rather than mourning the denied privilege of building the Temple, and continues to seek the promise of future blessing while acknowledging God's sovereignty.

Solomon at Gibeon. 1 Kings 3:5–15.

In these verses the following aspects are evident,

- 1 Divine Appearances.
- 2 Dreams.
- 3 Prayer.
- 4 Righteousness.
- 5 Uprightness.
- 6 Humility.
- 7 Spiritual Discernment.
- 8 Pleasing God.
- 9 Prayer Answered.
- 10 Divine Ways.

This dream came to Solomon about 985 BC, shortly after his ascension to the throne of Israel, and some 30 years after God had denied David permission to build the Temple.

That Solomon loved the Lord, 1 Kings 3:3, is magnified by his soul's wish to judge the people as Gods appointed King in Israel.

Proclaiming to be '... but a little child in experience, one can hardly proclaim such a dream as of the common variety. Asleep, with his normal bodily powers at rest, he displayed his reliance on the grace of God then.

It was a prevailing prayer, and he received more than he had asked for. God gave Solomon wisdom beyond any other, and promised that riches and honour would also flow to him.

When Solomon woke up, and realized the significance of the dream, he went up to Jerusalem, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace

offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

There are two important points here.

1 The burnt offering.

They burnt all the offering, excluding the blood, symbolizing the voluntary presentation to God. Anyone could offer a burnt offering as an act of devotion or dedication, even the poorest Israelite, yet the offering itself typified our Lord's offering of Himself unto death.

2 The peace offering.

The peace offering was literally a sacrifice of happiness, and the only offering in which the offerer shared by eating part of the sacrifice, illustrating a fellowship between,  
God and man,  
Man and man.

For us today this offering illustrates our peace with God through the blood of the Cross, and a fellowship with other believers.

Solomon's dedication of the temple. 1 Kings 8:22–54.

In these verses the following aspects are evident,

- 1 Prayer.
- 2 Divine Faithfulness.
- 3 Walk Before God.
- 4 God's Promises.
- 5 God's Word Sure.
- 6 Crying to God.
- 7 Divine Care.
- 8 God's People.
- 9 Divine Hearing.
- 10 Divine Justice.
- 11 Repentance.
- 12 Divine Teacher.

The dedication took place about 970, and shows' Solomon to be a wise king, and an understanding theologian.

As Solomon stood before the altar giving God the glory, he listed the following particulars,

- 1 God is a faithful God, keeping His covenants, 1 Kings 8:23,
- 2 God's immensity is such that even the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, 1 Kings 8:27,
- 3 Being omnipresent, we cannot confine God to Solomon's temple, 1

- Kings 8:27–30,
- 4 Even so, we may expect God to act in response to those who seek Him, especially those who approach the house uniquely called by His name, 1 Kings 8:29,
  - 5 Solomon also wanted God to answer, including the supplications of foreigners who would come to Jerusalem to seek God, 1 Kings 8:41–42.

The prayer concludes with a general request that God would hearken to his people.

Jonah prayed unto his God out of the fish's belly. Jonah 2:1–9.

In these verses, the following aspects are evident,

- 1 Prayer.
- 2 Crying to God.
- 3 Prayer Heard.
- 4 Sin Separates.
- 5 Repentance.
- 6 Deliverance.

When Jonah became the first submariner about 765, it was only about 800 years before Jesus used him as a sign to the Pharisees.

Nevertheless, there is a greater side to Jonahs' prayer, it is a prayer of thanksgiving that the fish has saved him from drowning, and uttered from the belly of the fish.

Another point that is his usage of words from the Psalms,

Verse	Psalm
2. And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.	The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid. The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.
	In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. 18:4–6

	O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. 30:3
	In my distress I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue. 120:1-2
3. For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.	Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. 42:7
4. Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.	But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple. 5:7
	For I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes: nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee. 31:22
5. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.	Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. 69:1
	I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. 69:2
	Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me. 69:15
6. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.	In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. 18:16
	O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. 30:3

<p>7. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.</p>	<p>In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears. 18:6</p>
	<p>When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday. 42:4</p>
	<p>When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. 142:3</p>
<p>8. They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.</p>	<p>I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the Lord. 31:6</p>
<p>9. But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.</p>	<p>Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: 50:14</p> <p>Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God. 50:23</p> <p>I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. 116:17</p>

Let us now look at the parallels between Jonah and the seamen,

Both prayed to Yahweh, Jonah 2:2,  
 Both experienced crisis in the sea, Jonah 2:3,  
 Both were delivered, Jonah 2:6,  
 Both offered sacrifice and vows, Jonah 2:9.

Jonah prayed when he was in trouble. Although it was trouble that he had brought upon himself through one act of disobedience.

No place is amiss for prayer. Where was Jonah when he prayed? We talk about being in the 'deep end'; Jonah was in the deep of the oceans, kept alive by a miracle in the belly of the fish.

Hezekiah's prayer unto the Lord. 2 Kings 19:15–19



The shortest prayer in the Bible is found at Matthew 14:30, where Peter cries out “Lord, save me”. This is another Biblical Prayer where little is said, but much was done.

In these verses, the following aspects are evident,

- 1 Prayer.
- 2 Divine Hearing.
- 3 Divine Vision.
- 4 Deliverance.

Sennacherib made his advance against Jerusalem about 705, and from that day to this, Hezekiah’s strategy has never improved.

Let us consider the following points in this childlike prayer,

- 1 It was not for God to read the letter – He was there when it was composed,
- 2 Hezekiah wanted God to vindicate His claim that Jerusalem was His City,
- 3 Hezekiah wanted God to consider the matter, and then suggest a strategy for Hezekiah with which to work,

In this prayer,

- 1 Hezekiah acknowledged God's sovereignty, 2 Kings 19:15,
- 2 Refers to Sennacherib's defiance of God and the impotence of Sennacherib's gods, 2 Kings 19:16–18,
- 3 Hezekiah looked to God for deliverance, 2 Kings 19:19.

Daniel’s prayer. Daniel 9:3–19.

In these verses the following aspects are evident,

- 1 Prayerfulness.
- 2 Divine Faithfulness.
- 3 God’s Righteousness.
- 4 Mercy.
- 5 Divine Call.
- 6 God’s Word Sure.
- 7 Prayerlessness.
- 8 Divine Justice.
- 9 Intercession.

There are two major points at this time,

- 1 One of the most remarkable points about Daniel is that although God used him in some of the greatest prophetic words in the Old Testament Daniel was not a priest, but a nobleman by birth.
- 2 Many scholars of the Bible regard, and call these verses the best and most sincere examples of a prayer by any man in the Old

Testament.

Daniel emptied his heart out to God in a confession regarding the past sins of the people, and while, he associated himself with these sins 32 times.

In his prayer, he approached God because of his loyal love, and God's covenant with Israel, yet he acknowledged they deserved judgment.

Daniel 9:18 has to be regarded as one of the greatest gems of the Scriptures where Daniel bases his plea for restoration – not on the past or even future righteousness – of Israel, but on God's covenantal faithfulness.

It is here Daniel addresses' God as a God to be feared, and a God to be trusted.

This is the 'HERE' section in Daniel's prayer,

- 1 Here is a penitent confession of sin, the cause of the troubles the people for so many years,
- 2 Here is a self-abasing acknowledgment of the righteousness of God,
- 3 Here is a believing appeal to the mercy of God,
- 4 Here are the pleas for the reproach of God's people, and the ruins of God's sanctuary to be repaired,
- 5 Here is an intense request to God to reinstate the captive Jews to their former estates,
- 6 Here are the pleas to enforce the petitions.

This is the 'NOW' section in our prayer life,

- 1 Now is the time for a confession of sin that the people have been under for so long,
- 2 Now is the time to acknowledge the righteousness of God,
- 3 Now is the time to appeal to God for mercy,
- 4 Now is the time to plead with God that we might overcome the reproach of being God's people,
- 5 Now is the time to request God to restore those in bondage,
- 6 Now is the time to plead with God as Abraham did.

The believing earnestness of this prayer should be humble, followed by us.

For the sins of the people. Ezra 9:5–15.

In these verses the following aspects are evident,

- 1 Prayer.

- 2 Confession of Sin.
- 3 God's Grace.
- 4 Divine Compassion.
- 5 Divine Protection.
- 6 God's Mercy.
- 7 God's Righteousness

Although similar to Daniel's prayer, it is regarded as one of the great confessional prayers in the Bible. Ezra's prayer is void of any specific requests or excuses, feeling overwhelmed by the sins of the people then.

Paul's prayer for the Ephesians. Ephesians 3:13–21.

In these verses, the following aspects are evident,

- 1 Prayer for the Church.
- 2 Heavenly Father.
- 3 Spiritual Relationships.
- 4 Spiritual Power.
- 5 Spiritual Love.
- 6 Spiritual Fullness.

The mystery by which God has joined Jew and Gentile is the same as the fatherhood idea. God became our Father when we received him through the Son's gift of eternal life.

To understand this idea a little better, it is necessary for us to look at other Scriptures, and Jewish legalities at the time of Jesus.

John 13:13	Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.	Servants
John 15:15	Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.	Friends
John 20:17	Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.	Brethren

Jesus, then held that there would be a natural transition from a lower position to a higher position

Paul also understood that we would become part of the Father's family.

Romans 8:15	For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.	Family
Romans 8:23	And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.	Heavenly body
Galatians 4:5	To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.	Family
Ephesians 1:5	Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,	Established in heavenly places

Jewish Law, at the time of Jesus, and taught to Paul by Gamaliel, clearly states that if a son asked his father to adopt a servant, the servant would become a full member of the family, and have equal rights to any family inheritance of the son.

The apostle is concerned for the welfare of the Ephesians that his tribulations would not weaken them, but as family members, they would gather around spiritually and support him in prayer.

## EXAMPLES OF OUR LORD'S PRAYER LIFE

\*\*\*\*\*

### Morning devotions. Mark 1:35.

Jesus found time to pray, unlike today where we hear the cry 'I have to get the breakfast done'. 'I have to do the school lunches'.

Jesus did not get distracted from His devotions; He retreated to a quiet place and focussed on the Father.

Jesus knew, living as a man that He needed a daily recharged understanding and relationship with God that He could face the challenges He would meet that day. His example is a challenge to all believers.

### Solitary devotions. Luke 5:15–16.

Fame brought the idea of popular religion. Popular religion brought the idea of showmanship. Showmanship brought the idea of idol euphoria and mass hysteria.

Jesus' actions spoke louder than words. His words said 'Just the Father and myself'.

### All-night devotions. Luke 6:12

How much time for prayer? Ten minutes, twenty minutes, maybe forty–five minutes.

Men look upon bodily diseases where they need prayer to remove the evil that is causing the disease, but Scripture states that a prayerless soul will receive the message 'Be gone, for I know you not'.

### Evening devotions. Mark 6:46–47.

A day of ministry followed by a time of infilling. The disciples were in a man–made vessel they thought they could rely on, and harassed by Satan as the elements tossed them about.

The Godhead was in communion. The angels were watching the disciples. At the appointed time, Jesus walked over the annoying elements, and quickly brought everything under control. Two points manifest themselves here,

AIndirect prayer works, for Jesus would have lifted His disciples before the Father then,

BDirect prayer works, the elements behaved themselves when commanded by Jesus, and it was a smooth trip for the disciples.

Gethsemane devotions. Luke 22:41–42

Perhaps one of the most significant parts of this Scripture is the fact that our Lord went to the Mount of Olives.

The current Olive trees in the current Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives probably originated in the early New Testament times, making them nearly two thousand years' old. Trees raised from seeds consistently produce inferior fruit, the grafted cutting producing a much better quality fruit.

The Israelites used this precious yellow oil for,

- 1 Cooking purposes as an essential part of diet, Deuteronomy 7:13,
- 2 Applying to the skin and hair, Psalm 2:6,
- 3 Anointing guests, Luke 7:46,
- 4 Healed wounds when mixed with wine, Luke 7:34,
- 5 Lamps with a wick made of flax, producing a bright flame when lit, Exodus 25:6,
- 6 A symbol of the Holy Spirit, Isaiah 61:1.

Luke, in his gospel, also makes three other points that other three evangelists omit totally,

- 1 When Christ was in his agony, there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. It was a part of his humiliation that a ministering spirit thus strengthened him.
- 2 Being in agony, he prayed more earnestly. Prayer, though never out of season, is in a special way seasonable when we are in an agony.
- 3 In this agony his sweat was as great drops of blood falling down. This showed the travail of his soul.

Therefore 'This cup', Luke 22:42 when fully understood in context means 'that which is allotted to a person'.

If our Lord,

- 1 Needed an angel to strengthen him,
- 2 Prayed more earnestly because of the internal pain,
- 3 Jesus sweated blood under the pressure of His burden then.

We have to ask 'How much do we put into our prayers?' Lord, help us make your words our words, 'not My will, but Yours'

## UNWISE PRAYER

Elijah flees to the wilderness. 1 Kings 19:4.

Elijah had relied upon God's protective powers over him all in the past, yet when Jezebel sent him a threatening letter, he fled.

God left Elijah at this time that he might reflect just where his power came from, for in the desert, under a juniper tree – a desert shrub that can grow to 3 metres high – he was no better than his fathers were.

Jonahs' complaint to God. Jonah 4:3.

About 880 BC Elijah made a request that God take his life from him, to stop Jezebel separating his soul from his body. About 110 years later, 770 BC, Jonah made the same request, not for the same reason, but because he knew that if Nineveh repented, God would spare them, and Jonah did not want Israel's enemies to receive any kindness from God. Therefore, Jonah chose to request death rather than be an important part of God's graciousness and mercy.

To compound an unwise prayer even more, Jonah, in the previous verse had accurately listed five natures of God – the reason why he was there,

- 1 God is gracious – He longs for people to respond to Him,
- 2 God is merciful – He is full of affection for His creation,
- 3 God is slow to anger – He prefers repentance to punishment,
- 4 God is abundant in loving-kindness,
- 5 God is the One who relents in sending calamity.

## UNIVERSAL NEED.

God is to be praised in the Kingdom. Psalm 65:2.

In this thanksgiving psalm although the name Sion or Zion is used, it is about Jerusalem.

The implication here is that if our praise and prayers are truly the fruit of the Spirit of Christ in us, then we shall reach a communion with God where we can talk freely to God as talking to one we love.

Blessings promised. Isaiah 56:7.

Isaiah 3–8 would appear to give an assurance that non-Israelites will also enjoy the blessings of the kingdom age.

Jesus quoted these words when He drove the money changers out of the temple, for the blessings we receive when we are in God's house far exceeds any visual comforts, i.e. the money in the till from the sale of commodities God has placed on this earth, and cannot be made bitter.



## POSTURE IN PRAYER.

Bowing. Exodus 34:8

Bowing depicted an act of humility Psalms 35:14 and 57:6, and worship Exodus 4:31 and 12:27, to God, who had indisputably descended to be near His people is undeniable, for His presence was manifested by His glory within the cloud, and Moses made haste, bowing his head toward the earth as he worshipped.

Therefore bowing under these circumstances is the worship from the people to God, for the work that He had done for them.

Kneeling. Mark 14:35

Kneeling is a sign of reverence, obedience, or respect.

Therefore, Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane was not the prayer of a weak and fearful man, but more about His impending although temporary – alienation from God, which He would experience on the cross.

The Hebrew word for kneel comes from the same root as the word for blessing, a fact that Jesus would be, by the Father, as all things were restored unto Him.

Raising ones hands. Psalm 141:2.

Raising ones hands as in blessing a person, as in the Wave Offering, to receive God's Gifts as they are poured out.

Prostrating. Ezra 10:1

There are three forms of prostration in the scriptures,

- 1 When overwhelmed by God's Presence, Genesis 17:3,
- 2 Voluntarily in prayer, Revelation 5:8,
- 3 Under the burden of prayer, Matthew 26:39.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PRAYER.

There are two distinct aspects in this section.

The Lord promised the Holy Spirit that he would guide us, John 14:16.

We saw above, where Jesus was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, the Father sent an angel to strengthen Him.

Jesus, immediately before His Crucifixion, promised the disciples that He would ask the Father to send another Comforter to us, FOR WHATEVER NEED WE HAD, and in the most instances, our prayer life is the greatest need we have.

John is the only Gospel writer to use the term 'parakletos', who is ever beside us to give advice and counsel.

Biblically three central truths are regarding the Holy Spirit,

- 1 He is A Person,
- 2 He is God,
- 3 He has specific functions in the economic trinity of God.

The Holy Spirit will help us in our prayer. Romans 8:26–27

The work of the Holy Spirit is not to call attention to Himself, but to help the Christian to make intercessions to God, and deny the enemy victory. Because of our inability to pray intelligently about every situation, Jesus has given us the Holy Spirit for those times of moral, physical, or emotional weakness.

Often, because of worldly pressure in and on our lives, we cannot pray effectively, and have already said what we could to God, the Holy Spirit 'makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered', which is better presented as 'unspoken sighings' from our hearts with no words involved.

## PRAY TO GOD

Don't bother with the others. Matthew 6:7

Jesus at this time is referring to the Gentile practice of naming all the 'Gods' individually, thereby ensuring that you offended no-one by not naming their god.

For enemies. Matthew 5:44

This was a completely new teaching, and is not found anywhere in the Old Testament.

Without show.

1 The decree. Daniel 6:10.

The fact that Daniel was aware of the decree, and its implications towards him, is remarkable that it caused Daniel to seek God immediately.

Although the trap against Daniel was sprung, it gave God the chance to demonstrate two points,

- a. Daniel's example is one of legitimate disobedience to the government order,
- b. The lions did not attack Daniel, but afforded him a complete night's rest.

2 Of hypocrisy in prayer. Matthew 6:5

The Scribes and Pharisees were guilty of two great faults in prayer, vainglory and vain repetitions.

Reward in this context means 'grace'. If man's reward is greater than God's grace, then their hypocrisy has cost them a lot, for grace means,

Using mnemonics we find that 'grace' means,

God's

Riches

At

Christ's

Expense

If He does not give His people what they ask, it is because He knows they do not need it, and that it is not for their good.

3 Peter's training vision. Acts 10:9.

Peter had to be on his own, and the easiest way for that to happen

was for the Spirit to place upon his heart a desire to pray, yet while the Spirit had to prepare Peter's heart for a lesson that went far beyond the acceptable parameters of a Jew.

The message at this point is "If I have said ALL animals are clean, who is man to say that they are not?"

Therefore, the implication the teaching did not do away with the Law of Moses, for God had done the cleansing.

With fasting, Nehemiah1:4.

The need for fasting at this time becomes obvious when we look at what Nehemiah's prayer involved,

- 1 Pleading the mercy of God,
- 2 Confessing sin (notice that Nehemiah, like Ezra and Daniel identifies himself with his people),
- 3 Acknowledges the purity of God's judgment,
- 4 Asking for success in the next step (which would require the king to reverse the decision he had made) as recorded in Ezra 4:21.

Fasting. Acts 13:2-3.

It is at this point that the Gentile world was to receive – in full – the gospel message because a group of ordinary people, who were praying without having satisfied their earthly bodies with an earthly substance of satisfaction, were seeking the Lord's Will with one mind.

Paul and Barnabas separated from the other disciples by the command of the Holy Spirit and commenced Paul's first missionary journey. They went to the cities of Galatia in Asia Minor where Paul used the Jewish synagogues as a platform for preaching the gospel.

Then, as now, they encountered opposition from what should have been fellowship synagogues.

## THE POWER OF PRAYER

General. 2 Corinthians 1:11.

The report that Titus brought to Paul encouraged Paul to urge the Corinthian church forward in intercessory prayer.

Dependant on faith. John 14:13.

It is no good scribbling a few words down on a piece of paper, and then reading them out, and adding as an afterthought 'in my name'.  
'...in my name' is not a delightful formula – when added to the end of a prayer – to get a desired answer from God.  
'...in my name' literally means praying to accomplish the desire that Jesus has for you then.

Increased by self-denial, Matthew 17:21.

We can only ever undertake battles with demonic oppression when our spiritual resources are at their closest point with God.  
It comes down to a party with cream cakes or prayer – YOUR WILL or mine.

Manifested in the Old Testament. James 5:18.

When Elijah had prayed for rain after the three-year drought, God answered his prayer, and the rains came.  
James at his time is declaring that all men are the same. All can pray, and all can pray for miracles.

Unlimited to believers, John 15:7

To bear fruit, a Christian must abide in Jesus. To have an effectual prayer life, His Word must abide in us.

## ACCEPTABLE TIME

David1 A warning not to tempt God.

About 1018, when David was anointed king over both Israel and Judah, he went forward and captured Jerusalem.

In Psalm 95:7–8 David declares that he believes the Lord will guide and lead His People (sheep) into the areas (pastures) where He will protect and provide us.

It is also here that David includes the idea of obedience.

Compare the Israelites' provocation of God in the Wilderness at Meribah, Exodus 17:2,

2 David prayed – God forgave. (The Joy of Forgiveness)

About 1004, David wrote Psalm 32:5–6. Psalm 32 is a meditative psalm that conveys a depth of wisdom generally attributed to Solomon rather than David.

It is at this time, and with this train of thought, that David acknowledges the size of his sin, and approaches God. However, repentance and confession have never merited forgiveness by God, but they are required for us to enjoy the freedom of sin given by God's Grace.

Psalm 51 is regarded as a 'companion' psalm as both reflect the anguish of David's soul after his sin against both Bathsheba and Uriah.

3 David begs for relief.

About 993, David wrote Psalm 69:13 in response to the uprising that Absalom had instigated. David, having fled from Jerusalem, persisted in calling out to Him who could save him while the ungodly attempted to engulf him.

Isaiah – gracious promise to the gentiles.

Isaiah, about 712 BC, and approximately 200 years before the event, wrote of Israel's deliverance from the seventy years of captivity. Although the Israelites returned to Israel at this time, they remained under the power of a Gentile Nation.

Therefore, Isaiah's word at this time is more applicable to the Gentiles than to the Jews.

Thus the term in this passage, Isaiah 49:8–9 is closely linked with

Galatians 4:4.

The Father is the Lord, the Son is the Redeemer, but man poured contempt upon him.

It is also here that we have a pledge promised for all believers. The Chosen Nation refused the Holy One of Israel at His First Advent, the Gentiles accepted Him, and were blessed, while the Chosen Nation has been persecuted ever since.

The acceptance of God's Mercy releases all from the curse of the law; God's Grace through Jesus releases man from the territory of sin. Moreover, both are in Christ.

Paul – the conduct of the ministry.

Paul, 2 Corinthians 6:1–2, set out – with others around him – to prove that the acceptable time had not ceased to exist with our Lord's death and resurrection, but was continuing through Jesus' earthly ministers, and continues even today.

## DIRECT PRAYER TO GOD

Against hypocrisy in prayer. Matthew 6:6

The suggestion here is a room where a person would store their treasures.

Let us, for a minute, consider a filing cabinet. It is secure, and has several drawers. If it were empty, it would not be of value to anyone. If, on the other hand, the drawers were semi full, it would give encouragement to the person who stored treasures in the filing cabinet to put more in.

If we take the treasures to represent souls won for the kingdom, healings, blessings, and answers to problems, the desire would not be to gloat or show the contents (hypocrisy), but to try and fill it even more (secret). We assume, and take for granted, that all Christians pray, yet the Scribes and Pharisees – God’s Old Testament teachers and priestly leaders – were guilty of three great faults in prayer, Vainglory, Vain repetitions, Vain beliefs that their position made them better than all others, If we are prayerless, then we are graceless.

How to pray. Matthew 6:9

Jesus, by His terminology “After this manner ...” is not teaching that this is the prayer to use, but that it is a prayer outline for general use. Therefore, ALL prayer should follow the format,

- 1 Hallowing God’s Name,
- 2 Petitioning God to meet personal needs,
- 3 Doxology.

By using ‘Our’, suggests that Jesus wants our prayer to be corporate, and uplifting one another.

Thus, the first part of the prayer is of an intercessory nature, the second part is of a public nature.



## PRAYER REQUEST

To a visitor, Genesis 18:3

Although Abraham almost certainly did not immediately recognize his visitor as part of the Godhead, he still offered typical oriental courtesies to his guests.

As one goes through these verses, this was obviously neither a vision nor a dream. Cp Genesis 18:8, 'they did eat'.

Safety of travellers. Genesis 19:2

These two angels had left Abraham talking to the third angel earlier. The fact that Lot was in the gate – the centre of the city's public activities – could well suggest that Lot was a judge in the city. Although Lot was apparently free from the works of the city, and as such was regarded as good, his heart had not guided any others towards a life of salvation.

Although the angels entered his house, and came under his protection, they still had to protect Lot so that they could help in his escape the following morning.

Esteem for Jerusalem. Psalm 122:2

Oh, that we should forever keep in mind the heavenly Jerusalem! Jerusalem on earth called the beautiful city, the City of God, and is a type of gospel church.

God sends afflictions for good. Job 33:26

This is an amazing passage when we realize that Job lived about 1967 BC, placing him between the replenishing of the earth after the Flood, and the call to Abraham to separate from his family, for when man sees himself as he really is, he will quickly realize how merciful God is.

Although we see pain as the fruit of sin, God uses it to cause an event in a persons life.

Is this not a good reason for seeking God's Will in our lives?

## UNITED PRAYER

### The Jews in the latter days. Zechariah 8: 21–22

When God approaches us in mercy, we must go to meet him with joy. Up to this point, the Jews had been quick to discover the idolatries of other nations, but had also immersed themselves into that way of life. God will now require the Chosen Race to do an about turn, and not only teach the heathen, but also actively encourage them to worship God as well.

### Zacharias and Elisabeth. Luke 1:10

There are some beautiful points to this section. Luke tells us that 'the whole multitude of the people were praying'. Zacharias, according to his lot, was to burn incense.

This was a privilege that would happen only once in the lifetime of any priest. Zacharias and Elisabeth were sinners as much as anyone else, but because of their piety and integrity, they were about to be blessed through the birth of a son – John the Baptist.

Zacharias and Elisabeth had prayed often for a child, but the time was not until that point, and, although Zacharias heard all that the angel said; because he questioned what the angel had said in an unbelieving way, he was struck dumb.

However, with the multitude of the people praying, and Zacharias, on his 'only once in the lifetime' chances to burn incense before God, Zacharias and Elisabeth were about to receive their 'once in a lifetime gift' a son whose duty it would be to herald in God's Anointed.

### The Apostles unite in prayer. Acts 1:14

At this time, just after Jesus had ascended into heaven, it was a time of trouble and danger for the disciples.

All of God's people must be praying people to stay with God. The disciples joined as one. For,

- 1 Protection,
- 2 The work that was before them,
- 3 For God's presence to remain with them,
- 4 The Holy Spirit who had been promised,

Not to do away prayer, but to encourage them and quicken them with

their prayer times.

A little group who united in love, commendable in their conduct, passionate in prayer, all to promote the 'New Life' in Christ, will increase rapidly.

#### Peter released from prison. Acts 12:12

Peter released from the prison by an angel at God's Command.

This brings about a massive scenario,

- 1 The angel entered the prison unchallenged,
- 2 The angel released Peter unchallenged,
- 3 The chains holding Peter fell away – they were not going to get in God's way,
- 4 The guards continued sleeping peacefully, totally unaware of what was to become their lot later in the morning,
- 5 The doors and gates of the prison opened to allow God's anointed to pass through,
- 6 Clear of the prison, the angel left Peter to go his own way,
- 7 Peter, after a moments thought, went to the 'house of Mary'.
- 8 Traditionally regarded as the site of the Last Supper, it had now become the central pivot of the Church in Jerusalem,
- 9 The people inside continued to pray,
- 10 Peter knocked on the door,
- 11 A maid answered his knock,
- 12 She informed the people that Peter's ghost was outside,
- 13 Finally, with Peter perhaps just a little concerned at the delay, they let him in,
- 14 There was concern within the prison when the guards awoke,
- 15 Anxiety increased as the guards told Herod that his prize prisoner had departed,
- 16 The payment Satan demanded through Herod was the death of the guards, but the wrath of God still – until God judges him from the judgement throne – hangs over Herod.

## CONDITIONS OF TRUE PRAYER.

### Contrition.

- 1 A fake and a true fast. Isaiah 58:9.  
A remorseful heart can expect promises representing real godliness, whilst pointing a finger in prayer expresses a gesture of contempt, and a fake attitude.
- 2 God's requirements for blessing: prayer, and repentance, 2 Chronicles 7:14.  
Affliction of the soul causes a true sorrow for sin by removing envy, and malignant passions.

### Faith. Mark 11:23–24.

If we use mnemonics here, it will help us understand this type of prayer, Forsaking All I'll Take Him

When Mark states 'Whatsoever things you desire, believe in a result, and you shall possess them', Mark 11:24, he was recording nothing more than a law that was experienced by Jesus in His own life, Mark 14:36.

While producing a spiritual reason about why any should demand the removal of a physical mountain is nearly impossible, our Lord is teaching the disciples not to look for small results when they can obtain large results if it is within the parameters of God's Will.

### Heartfelt. Jeremiah 29:13

Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

These words are taken from the letter that Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem, to the 3,023 Jews whom the Babylonians had taken captive in 597 BC, exhorting them to live a normal life until deliverance.

### Obedience. 1 John 5:14

Because God's will is always best for His children, then those who are doing that which is pleasing to Him are obedient to doing that which is right.

### Righteousness. James 5:16

The righteous person will always know what and when to pray.

## PRAYER

Prayer encouraged. Mark 9:29.

While the disciples had previously cast out demons, Mark 6:13, they found that they were powerless at this time, possibly because they had become overconfident with the power they had.

They had to go back to the basics of their calling and belief that spiritual ability came through a total dependence on God's power in their lives. Therefore, for us prayer has to remain a constant facet in our lives that we might remain reliant upon God's mercies and strength.

Prayer for the Church

1 Jesus. John 17:20.

Jesus prayed that the believers might appear to nonbelievers as one body, and driven by one heart.

Since the believers form ONE church, disputing minor details causes them to create a Church image that looks as if it is about to fall over.

2 Paul, for Israel's salvation, Romans 10:1.

Brethren, my heart's desires and prayers to God are for Israel to be saved.

As the Old Testament was a shadow of future events, and the New Testament is the fulfilment.

Israel was characteristic of many religious nations, fruitless because of the lack of knowledge.

The strictness of the law-righteousness declared that men needed salvation by grace, today, the ceremonies of the Church declare a 'righteousness' that still leaves men requiring a grace-righteousness.

The Church for the Church. James 5:16.

Confess to one another, not in a confessional, but openly. A righteous person will always know how to pray to bring about the will of God.

Prayer for wisdom. Psalm 90:12.

God gives us wisdom on how to use our days on earth. In addition, He gives abundantly and graciously when we ask. There is a greater awareness and understanding discovered when we seek God for His revealed will.

False leaders boast of possessing a greater wisdom, yet hearing them speak of God's Word with any clarity is impossible. Constant in prayer, that we might know God's direction for us day by day.

Prayer heard.

- 1 David takes comfort in the fact that God hears him. Psalm 3:4,  
Care and grief do us good, they make us look towards God in prayer.  
David's spirit, in the midst of the turmoil that is around him with the people turning to Absalom takes comfort in the fact that God will hear him, even in the midst of all this danger.
- 2 Though he were a son.... Hebrews 5:7.  
The reference here probably relates to Jesus' experience in the Garden of Gethsemane. The answer to the prayer was that His resurrection saved Him from death.

Priceless. Revelation 5:8.

Through the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, God's dealings with men are grace and mercy.

The harps were instruments of praise; the vials were full of odours, or incense, which signify the prayers of the saints: prayer and praise should always go together.

Prayer of righteousness. James 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".

Prayer sought. Romans 15:30.

Paul was well aware as to the value of effectual prayer. Therefore, we must also be careful lest we sacrifice the love and prayers of God's praying people.

Prayerfulness. Mark 1:35.

Jesus found time to pray to gain a renewed intimacy with God, and strength for facing the challenges before Him.

Prayerlessness. Zephaniah 1:6.

The people referred to here are the Israelites who started following the Lord, but then turned their backs upon Him, and Zephaniah calls upon them to abandon their apostate natures, and turn to God, and by that escape from the coming judgements.

The trust that they were relying upon was an inbuilt trust, which gave them the courage to turn away from God.

## INTERCESSORY

### Renewed prosperity, Job 42:8 & 10

At 1967 BC, this is the earliest recorded intercessory prayer in our Bibles. God had blessed Job, and Job had lived a life before God, until Satan tried to turn everything about.

Verse 10 states 'And the LORD turned the captivity of Job ...', but it would read better as 'And the LORD turned the fortunes of Job ...' Therefore, when Jesus said Matthew 5:44, 'But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;' Jesus was basing His teaching on a historical fact of some 2000 years earlier when Job prayed for his friends and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before.

### Substitution, Genesis 44:33

About 1680, Judah, the father of the tribe through whom Jesus was to come, made a moving plea to a brother (Joseph) who, at that point he had not recognised offering to take Benjamin's punishment upon himself. Although occupying the smallest amount of land, the tribe has played a major role in Israelite history.

With the city of Jerusalem between the territories of Benjamin and Judah, it foreshadowed the relationship of God and man through the Temple.

In the latter period of the judges, Benjamin almost disappeared from history when they mistreated a Levite and his concubine.

This is a striking and graphic illustration of what Judah's most notable descendant – Jesus – actually did at Calvary for the Jewish Nation.

### A sin not to pray. 1 Samuel 12:23.

About 1065, although Samuel was deeply distressed through the people's insistence for a king, Samuel refused to sin against God by not praying, but continued his life of intercession, and taught that there was a good and right way.

Those two tasks continue to be the spiritual tasks of God's shepherds in any era.

### God is a prayer-hearing God. Psalm 5:2.

Written about 1030, and about the time Saul was trying to kill David, Psalm 5 is often called a 'morning psalm'.



Whilst a lot depends upon how we start each day, prayer is the most important time of our daily devotional time.

Fellowship demands communication. A crash in our communion time brings a disruption in fellowship.

Therefore, while God speaks to man through His Word, man talks to God through prayer and then listens for the divine response.

The stopping of the pestilence. 2 Samuel 24:17.

About 990 we get a final look at the aging King David.

As the reigning monarch, he openly confessed his sins when they were pointed out to him, David loved the people of his kingdom, and, seeing the intense suffering that was being placed on them, he asked for God's judgment to be placed on him, that the people might go free.

This alone made him the most loved of the kings of Israel.

Paul requests their prayers. Romans 15:30.

Although Paul was always praying for the assemblies he had established, and had always sought God on which direction to take, he also sought the prayers of those he had been closely associated.

## CRYING OUT TO THE LORD.

The Egyptians place the Israelites into bondage. Exodus 2:23.

This would have taken place about 1500 BC, and Moses would have been about 40 years old at this time.

The reigning Pharaoh at this time would have been Thutmose III who reigned with his mother-in-law/aunt, Hatshepsut, from 1504 to 1483 BC. The Israelites' bondage continued for nearly 30 years, during which time they sighed, groaned, and sighed again. Sometimes God permits the suffering to continue for many years, then He remembered His Covenant, and, ignoring their lack of merit points, He set everything up in response to their crying out to Him.

One can but ask, "Is this a pointer to Matthew 11:28?"

Moses comforts the murmuring Israelites. Exodus 14:10

About 1462, on their way to the Promised Land, the escapees muttered and complained about, and against Moses. What is so different today? This is the basic theme throughout the Book of Exodus – ignore God, blame the man leading.

There are, however, some other facts that need to be noted, Not all of the people were Israelites, Exodus 12:38.

- 1 Not all of the people were Israelites, Exodus 12:38.
- 2 Not all the Israelites were strong in their faith.
- 3 Written Scripture was not available in a daily newsheet form.
- 4 They listened with half-open ears, their minds on getting away, and they could not comprehend where Moses and Aaron were getting their instructions.
- 5 Christian history leaves no room for self-righteousness, for many Christians have also made many mistakes through a lack of theological insight.

Egyptians at the back, water at the front, there was only one way to look – UPWARDS – and then their deliverance came.

God uses a prophetess against the Canaanites. Judges 4:3

Again, the Israelites had run off the rails, and about 1270 God raised up Deborah to answer the Israelites cry unto Him.

Deborah's Divine knowledge came by the instruction and inspiration of the Spirit of God.

On God's orders, she commanded Barak to raise an army, but he would only agree to do so if she also came. Therefore, even of 'the genteel

sex' she was not prepared to send Barak where she would not go herself. Because of Barak's attitude, Deborah stated that the honour in the battle would go to a woman, not Barak.

Israel rebuked by a prophet. Judges 6:7–8.

About 1250 BC the Israelites cried out to the Lord. It is probably true to say that the people did not get the answer they wanted, for God sent them a prophet to teach them.

The prophet charged them with rebellion against the Lord through the sin of disobedience.

Repentance. Judges 10:10.

A wonderful lesson is to be found about 1125 BC. God is able to remove punishment for sin when sinners cry to the Lord for help; He is also able to multiply men's punishments according to the numbers of their sins and idols.

Prayer with confidence. Psalm 17:1.

Although many psalms have a prayer like format, only Psalms 17, 86, 90, 102, and 142 are prayers,

Although they do not give the historical background, the psalm would appear to reflect on the time Saul almost captured David, dating it about 1028.

The layout of Psalm 17 is close to the Lord's Prayer,

- 1 David presents his credentials of uprightness, verses 1–5,
- 2 He petitions the Lord for protection from wicked men, verses 6–14,
- 3 He expresses his hope for the future, verse 15.

The psalmist's hope in prayer. Psalm 130:1.

This is another of the captivity psalms, written about 550 BC.

The only way to get total relief from sin is by applying to God alone. People and churches offer many remedies. Others will suggest diversions as a way to get the problem out of the way, but only God cleanses and heals.

The Lord's eternal love. Psalm 102:1

This psalm is probably aligned to Daniel's vision of the seventy weeks, and would have been written about 539.

Written as a penitential psalm displaying an apparent despairing loneliness in the first seven verses, it later turns to encouragement towards the end.

The first part of the psalm is a prayer put into the hands of the afflicted; but the writer regards himself as a dying man with the words; 'My days are like a shadow'.

Temple order restored. Psalm 119:145–146

If we are in God's service, we need not fear those who try to set themselves as far as they can out of the reach of the convictions and commands of his law.

Bartimaeus healed. Mark 10:47

Bartimaeus, hearing many people going past him enquired who was there. Calling out as Jesus passed him, it was his faith that gave him sight, for it was by faith that he called out to the One he could not see.

## SEEKING GUIDANCE, Judges 1:1

\*\*\*\*\*

After Moses had brought the Israelites to the borders of the Promised Land, and the Lord took him, an era closed.

After Joshua had conquered most of the Promised Land – and the only reason they did not conquer it was the attitude of the people – another era closed.

Being convinced that the Canaanites – and this would have included all the ethnic groups – would continue the war. It is possible that they turned to the Urim and Thummim.

The high priest used the Urim and Thummim to decide God's Will, probably in order of appearance from the container. However, it was not a guaranteed way of getting an answer, for sometimes God refused to answer, 1 Samuel 28:6–25.

We do know that they lost their popularity before David, for he went directly to God in prayer.

God used the Major and Minor Prophets Urim and Thummim, with their last known use was by the apostles as they selected a replacement for Judas.

## ANSWERED PRAYER

Bitter waters made sweet. Exodus 15:24–25.

About 1460 BC heading towards the Promised Land, the Israelites arrived at Marah in the wilderness of Shur – which is traditionally found approximately 76 km southeast of the current town of Suez – a fragment of the entire desert region between Egypt and Palestine. Marah is the Hebrew word for ‘bitterness’.

There are two learning points here for the Israelites and us,

- 1 Water supplied by the Lord would be drinkable. The Lord, not the tree, made the water drinkable, but it only became drinkable by obedience.
- 2 As the Lord healed the bitter water, He would heal them both physically and spiritually.

The simple answer then to the Israelites was obey God, and not rebel as did the Egyptians, and the door against plagues arriving will be closed, for a rebellious Israelite is no better than a rebellious Gentile. Elim, meaning ‘trees’, was about 10 km South of Marah, which had a plentiful supply of good water. This lovely oasis was deliberately prepared for Israel (Psalm 23:2).

However, the numbers are interesting. The twelve wells of water would appear to point directly towards the Apostles, while the threescore and ten palm trees appear to denote the seventy whom Jesus sent out, and came back rejoicing, Luke 10:1–21.

The reversed sundial. 2 Kings 20:11.

As a sign from God to confirm Isaiah’s message, Hezekiah requested that the sundial would return ten degrees.

Although the details of this observed fact are not given, when considering 2 Chronicles 32:31 it becomes obvious that the effect was only seen in Judah.

Othniel delivers Israel. Judges 3:9.

Still in the same century, and about 45 years later, God started raising judges in Israel who would lead and free the people from oppression. The judges were not together in one area, but spread over all Israel.

The father of Othniel was Kenaz a brother to Caleb. Othniel is Israel's

first-mentioned judge, Joshua 15:17 and Judges 1:3.

It is thought that Kenaz is the progenitor of the Kenizzites, some nomadic people from the southeast who inhabited Hebron, Debir, and parts of the Negev.

Forty years later, and the Israelites had forsaken God and His blessings by turning to Baal and his consort 'Asherah', who appears to have been some kind of wooden representation of the female deity, Jeremiah 17:2.

Not surprisingly, God became angry, and permitted the Israelites to suffer eight years of bondage under Cushan-Rishathaim whose name translates 'doubly-wicked Cushan'

God delivered His People from Baal and his consort Asherah through Othniel.

The Spirit of the LORD did not only come upon Othniel, but also many others in the Old Testament, equipping them with leadership capabilities, enabling God to deliver the Israelites when they cried unto Him.

The sign of the fleece, Judges 6:39-40

About 1200 Gideon – whose name means 'one who cuts to pieces' became the fifth judge of Israel.

Gideon was of the Tribe of Manasseh of which only half entered the Promised Land, and as such, the Tribe became known as 'unfaithfulness to Yahweh'. His family did not follow his God, Judges 8:33.

The fleece also has a twofold meaning,

1 Although Gideon knew the will of God, Judges 6:11-16, he twice used the fleece, and by the use of impossible conditions, he tried to circumvent the will of God.

2 Gideon's fleece was not a method by which he discerned God's will; he already knew it.

The question then becomes 'Did Gideon see the dew on the first fleece as the Divine grace that would be poured out on him as the leader?

The next question then becomes 'Did Gideon see the dew on the second fleece as the Divine grace that would be poured out on Israel?

God met his conditions both times and then set out the strategy that

would guarantee victory for Israel.

God, however, did not want the 32,000 men in Gideon's army, and planned to win the battle with just 300 men, Judges 7:22. Gideon ended his life on a low note,

- 1 He punished Succoth and Penuel for not helping in his war against the Midianite kings,
- 2 He refused the people's offer to crown him king, testifying that only God was King,
- 3 He ordered the people to give him their golden earrings, taken as war spoil from the Ishmaelites,
- 4 He made an ephod to worship, and led his people astray with it, Judges 8:27

### Samuel.

- 1 Samuel is dedicated, 1 Samuel 1:27  
 About 1110 Samuel, whose name means 'heard of God' was born. This is a remarkable illustration in three aspects,
  - a. 'Heard of God' can be applied to both Hannah's prayer or to Samuel when prayed for Israel, and God heard him,
  - b. Weaning of a Hebrew child takes place between two to three years of age. Verse 24 which literally reads 'now the child was a child' simply call's attention to the young age of Samuel, for the Hebrew word for 'child' can also be translated 'an assistant or apprentice' to Eli.
  - c. It is a known fact that a line of text in the Septuagint, between the two occurrences of 'child', has been missed from the Hebrew text in translation.  
 This would make 1 Samuel 1:24 read, 'Now the child was [with them. And they brought him before the Lord; and his father slew his offering which he offered yearly to the Lord; and he brought near the child ...'

The implication is that Samuel was to live all of his life as one personifying the response of God to the prayerful intercession of His people.

However, after God answered Hannah's prayer, she was vigilant in paying the vow she had made, even though it meant she lost a son.

- 2 Philistines defeated. 1 Samuel 7:9.



As judge, Samuel visited yearly the cities of Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. From the time of the ark's arrival at Kirjath Jearim until Samuel's address in verse 3 was 20 years, and it stayed in Kirjath Jearim for about a further 70 years before

David retrieved it, and established it in Jerusalem. This would make it about 1070 when the Philistines attacked Israel. The following points now manifest themselves,

- a. When sinners begin to repent, they should expect Satan to mount an attack,
- b. The Israelites plead with Samuel to pray for them,
- c. Samuel offered a sacrifice, crying out for Israel.

God responded to the prayer, and the Lord caused the Philistines to flee with a mighty storm.

Freed from foes. Psalm 120:1.

Psalms 120–134 are known as Song's of Degrees or Song's of Ascents. There is disagreement amongst Biblical scholars as to the exact use of the psalms.

The first, and generally accepted possibility is that they were sung by the Jewish worshippers as they went up, i.e., ascended, to Jerusalem to celebrate the three great feasts each year – Passover in the spring, Pentecost in the early summer, and Tabernacles in the fall. This would date Psalm 120 at 993.

The second possibility is that they Hezekiah compiled them as a memorial of God's promise of 15 additional years of life, 2 Kings 20:11.

In favour of this possibility is the use of the same Hebrew term (ma`alah) for 'ascent' or 'degree' in the psalms and in the story of the 'degrees' on the sundial in 2 Kings. This would date Psalm 120 at 712. Irrespective of which view is taken, the outcome is that God answered prayer to free them from their foes.

Angelic deliveries. Daniel 9:21–22.

This would have taken place about 540. As spiritual, prayerful, and God fearing as Daniel was, God had to send angels with His answers to Daniel.

Today, because we are adopted by God, we cannot expect an angel to

arrive, and deliver an answer, but we can expect immediate answers from God.

Delayed responses. Daniel 10:12

This would have taken place about 535. There is one sure way of getting a satanic attack when seeking God.

Daniel waited twenty-one days for an answer in response to his fasting and prayers, yet neither his prayer nor self-denial had anything to do with the delay, it was purely and simply caused by angelic warfare.

Prayer and fasting for protection. Ezra 8:23.

Fasting often appears in Scripture.

Around 458 Ezra encouraged some of the Levites to go with him; and showing a complete trust in the Lord by the application of prayer and fasting, he did not ask for a military escort to go with him. His trust at this time was rewarded as God protected them on their journey, even though many were carrying large amounts of riches.

The continual infilling of the Spirit. Acts 4:31.

About 29 AD, John and Peter had been cast into prison for healing an impotent man. The following day, after they had been questioned, they were threatened and released.

Returning to where they were living, they prayed and rejoiced, and there was an immediate, but threefold, response from heaven,

- 1 'The place where they were assembled together was shaken',
- 2 'They were all filled with the Holy Spirit',
- 3 'They spoke the word of God with boldness'.

There is also a threefold aspect that needs to be seen here,

- 1 The Apostles had been filled with the Spirit in response to our Lord's prayer when He sent them out on ministry,
- 2 They had been filled on the Day of Pentecost,
- 3 They were filled again here.

It was not that previous fillings had been insufficient, simply a refuelling.

To sum up this section, we have the following types of answered prayer, Prayer for water to become drinkable.

God delivers Israel from Baal worshippers.

Winning a war God's Way  
A mother's prayer answered  
Enemy defeated  
Freed from foes  
Angelic deliveries  
Delayed responses  
Prayer and Fasting for protection  
Continuous infilling of the Spirit.

## UNANSWERED PRAYER

A word to husbands. 1 Peter 3:7.

Peter's implication here is that if a man does not respect his partner, how can he pray with them?

To place this within the confines of spiritually, our duty is to live with our Spiritual Partner as much as we should live with our earthly partner, and this means to honour BOTH.

If we fail this equation we may well find that prayers are 'hindered', i.e. 'cut off'.

Condemnation. Psalm 109:6–7.

Some preach and teach that the implication here relates to David and his enemies, yet what happened to Judas, Acts 1:16–20, was a fulfilment of this curse.

In this prayerful psalm, David pleads for God's judgment on his false accusers then on those he vehemently curses before asking God for deliverance, and closing with a vow of praise.

Others preach and teach that it is Jesus speaking here as a Judge.

If this is the case, then those who reject our Lord's salvation offer will find that their very prayers are amongst their sins.

Despising the law. Proverbs 28:9.

The Hebrew words for 'usury' and 'extortion', which first found in Leviticus 25:35–37,

- 1 Usury, meaning the adding on an additional sum to the principle,
- 2 Interest, usually translated as extortion, and meaning money taken by pressure applied,

are totally against God's principles governing transactions between His people, and were strictly forbidden, by either the Israelite or Gentile. For him who turned his ear away from hearing the law, his prayer and desires would become an abomination in God's sight.

Disobedience, 1 Samuel 14:37.

If God does not hear our prayer, it is either not the time for it to be answered, or sin in our life is blocking it. Either way points to

'disobedience'.

Whilst we should always first suspect and examine ourselves; a proud heart suspects every other person, and looks everywhere but at home for the sinful cause of calamity. Those most indulgent to their own sins are most severe upon others; those who most disregard God's authority are most impatient when their own commands are slighted.

Indifference. Proverbs 1:28.

If you have set God at nought, then you should not be surprised to find that your prayers are neglected.

Solomon, prior to this section, has declared how dangerous it is to listen to Satan, and avoid the calls of God.

Three aspects to indifference are,

- 1 Simple people love their simplified ideas of good and bad,,
- 2 Scorners, they scoff at everything that is sacred and serious,
- 3 Fools who hate to receive instruction, and have an intense dislike Godliness.

Iniquity,

- 1 Micah 3:4, Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.  
Micah at this point levels his accusations against the cruelty of the princes, and the falsehoods of the prophets.  
Micah had a zealous love of God, and for the souls of men; yet his concern for the people's salvation was his driving force at this time.
- 2 Isaiah 59:2, But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.  
At this time, God has not lost His power; but He has withheld His power because of the iniquities of the people.  
He has refused their prayers because of the people's insincerity.
- 3 Jeremiah 7:16, Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee.  
God even told Jeremiah not pray for this people, for they had worshipped and made sacrifices to false gods.  
The term 'queen of heaven' was an ancient cult tradition throughout the Orient, and used various names.

There would appear to be three distinct, yet separate interpretations to the name 'queen of heaven',

- a. The planet Venus, which was called Ishtar in Babylonian worship,
- b. The moon, which was often the object of worship in the ancient world;
- c. Ashtoreth, a female pagan deity.

Moreover, the cakes were probably in the shape of a woman, crescent moon, or a star.

#### Instability. James 1:6–7.

The waves rise and fall. They crest and trough. If a person is wavering like a wave with their faith, how can they not waver when asking God for something in prayer? Use verse 23 demonstration

#### Self-indulgence. James 4:3.

Self-indulgence is a sinful desire; therefore, self-indulgence will stop our prayer life, and the ability to express our desires toward God. When people ask God for prosperity, it can well signal self-indulgence is seeking an answer that has not been brought forth with the best of intentions.

Since worldly and fleshly lusts will never let us be content, we will never receive satisfaction.

Thus, James in this verse is issuing a warning for the Christian to avoid any friendship with this world, for worldly-mindedness is enmity to God, and prayers of this nature will return empty.

#### Stubbornness. Zechariah 7:13.

God's judgements in the Old Testament are there as a warning to the present day Christian not to take the same path.

Now, the Jews had started returning from exile, having accepted and paid God's Judgement.

The Jews had established four days of fasting for events that had happened some 67 years earlier in 586 BC, and are according to the importance the Jews placed on the fast,

- 1 The first was Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the day in the fifth month commemorating the day the temple.
- 2 The second was in the seventh month they mourned the murder of Gedaliah.
- 3 The third was in the fourth month when they remembered the

breaching of the walls of Jerusalem, and the Chaldeans entered the city.

- 4 The fourth was in the tenth month they recalled the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem.

Although the motive was honourable, the fasts were still manmade and not commanded by God.

Had the people heeded what the prophets were stating on behalf of God, they would never have been exiled, and no fast would have had to have been conjured up to try and please God.

The equation remains, stubbornness about listening to God's Word is sin, manmade fasts are sin, therefore God had no reason to answer them.