



*Are Your Prayers
Being Heard?*

A Ladder into Heaven

Abraham is known to have built altars and pray to his God. His son, Isaac also built an altar in the same place as his father and prayed to the God of his father. Isaac's son, Jacob, does the same. Accounts of Jacob building altars can be found in Genesis 12:7-8, 13:14-18, 33:18-20, 35:6-7. At one point, when Jacob spent the night in the same place as his father and grandfather before him, he had the following dream:

Genesis 28:10-18 And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran. And he came on a certain place, and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took of the stones of that place, and placed *them* at his head. And he lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed. And behold! A ladder was set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven! And behold! The angels of God *were* ascending and descending on it! And behold! Jehovah stood above it, and said, I *am* Jehovah, the God of Abraham your father, and the God of Isaac! The land on which you lie I will give to you and to your seed. And your seed shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south. And in you and in your Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I *am* with you, and will keep you in every *place* where you go, and will bring you again into this land. For I will not leave you until I have done that which I have spoken of to you. And Jacob awakened from his sleep. And he said, Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I did not know. And he was afraid, and said, How fearful *is* this place! This *is* nothing but the house of God, and this *is* the gate of Heaven! And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone which he had put at his head, and set it as a memorial pillar, and poured oil on the top of it.

Jacob was seeing a gateway into heaven where prayers were being heard. To this very day, the descendants of Abraham set themselves apart from the world and pray to Yehovah in this very place in Jerusalem where the temple once stood in.

Our Hearts are the Altar

This world has its share of problems. However, we can set ourselves apart from the troubles of this world and light an altar of prayer wherever we are. We are his temple.

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 Do not be unequally yoked together *with* unbelievers; for what fellowship does righteousness *have* with lawlessness? And what partnership does light *have* with darkness? And what agreement does Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part does a believer *have* with an unbeliever? And what agreement does a temple of God *have* with idols? For you are the temple of *the* living God, as God has said, "I will dwell in them and walk among *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

It is well known that sacrifices were made at the temple altar. In the same way, we can offer up the words of our prayers to Yehovah as an equal sacrifice.

Hosea 14:2 Take with you words, and turn to Jehovah. Say to Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive *us* graciously, that we may repay *with* the calves of our lips.

Through this offering of prayer, we can ask this same God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to remove iniquity (sin/lawlessness) from us and teach us His ways.

Psalms 119:108 I pray You, take the free-will offerings of my mouth, O Jehovah, and teach me Your judgments.

Our prayers are to be our continual sacrifice to Him.

Hebrews 13:15 By Him, then, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, *the* fruit of *our* lips, confessing His name.

With King David as our example, We can ask Yehovah to keep our hearts from evil things and let our prayers be as incense and a daily sacrifice to Him:

Psalms 141:1-4 *A Psalm of David.* O Jehovah, I cry to You; make haste to me, give ear to my voice when I cry to You. Let my prayer be set forth before You as incense, *and* the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Set a watch, O Jehovah, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips. Let not my heart turn aside to *any* evil thing, to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity; and let me not eat of their delicacies.

Do You want Your Prayers to be Heard?

One might assume that Yehovah, our God, hears all prayers. But King David asks more than once that his prayers be heard. Why does David say this?

Psalms 102:1-2 *A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before Jehovah.* Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, and let my cry come to You. Hide not Your face from me in the day when I am in trouble; bow down Your ear to me; in the day I call, answer me quickly.

We, too, want Yehovah to look towards us and hear our prayers and bless us.

Numbers 6:24-27 Jehovah bless you and keep you. Jehovah make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. Jehovah lift up His face to you and give you peace. And they shall put My name upon the sons of Israel. And I, I will bless them.

These are good prayers, but what could hinder prayer?

Sin Hinders our Prayers

We want our God to be attentive to our prayers, but there is a condition.

1 Peter 3:12 For the eyes of *the* Lord *are* on the righteous, and His ears *open* to their prayers. But *the* Lord's face *is* against *those* who do evil.

He wants to hear our prayers, but iniquity (sin/lawlessness) can get in the way.

Isaiah 59:1 Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened so that it cannot save, nor is His ear heavy so that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have come between you and your God, and your sins have hidden *His* face from you, from hearing. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue has muttered perverseness.

He is very clear about this, even concerning prayer.

Isaiah 1:15-20 And when you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do good; seek judgment, reprove the oppressor. Judge the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, says Jehovah; though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; but if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured *with* the sword; for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken.

However, we can pray to Him and ask him to take away our sins. Although our sins are as scarlet, He has become our Savior and can wash us white as snow. All have sinned and need salvation.

1 John 1:5-10 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His Word is not in us.

However, He expects righteous obedience – for us to walk in the light of truth.

The Prayers of the Righteous

Yehovah makes it very clear who he hears and who he is far from.

Proverbs 15:29 Jehovah *is* far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

Not only does our Heavenly Father hear the prayers of the righteous man, but those prayers avail much.

James 5:16 Confess faults to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous one avails much.

In prayer, David reminds Yehovah of the proving his heart.

Psalms 17:1-6 *A Prayer of David.* Hear the right, O Jehovah; listen to my cry; Give ear to my prayer, *for it is* not in lips of deceit. Let my judgment go out from Your presence; let Your eyes behold uprightly. You have proved my heart; You have visited *me* in the night; You have tried me, and You will find nothing; my thoughts do not pass beyond my mouth. Concerning the works of men, by the Words of Your lips, I am kept *from* the paths of the destroyer. My steps have been held in Your paths, *so that* my footsteps have not slipped. I have called on You, for You will hear me, O God; bow down Your ear to me; *hear* my speech.

We should make our hearts altars of prayer such that we, likewise, can ask Him to prove our hearts. Yes, all have sinned. But, we are to turn from sin.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,

A righteous man is quick to confess his sin(s), turn away from them, and sin no more. If you research the life of King David, you will find that David sinned. However, David turned to his Savior with prayer and a repentant heart.

Psalms 51:9-12 Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me *with* a willing spirit.

The Sacrifices of a Royal Priesthood

Obviously, Christ's death, burial, and resurrection on the cross were the ultimate sacrifice for sin. However, as previously stated, we should obviously be quick to confess our sin(s), turn away from them, and sin no more.

In the past when sins occurred, sacrifices were made with prayer. Study will show that sacrifices and offerings were for fellowship, thanksgiving, as well as a variety of other reasons. Essentially, our continual prayers from the temple at the altar of our hearts are to be those offerings. In fact, our God has drawn us to him such that we can be a holy priesthood which offers up such sacrifices.

1 Peter 2:4-5 For having been drawn to Him, a living Stone, indeed rejected by men, but elect, precious with God; you also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

We are a living sacrifice to him. We are to be set apart from this world, and not be conformed to it. We are to please God through righteousness.

Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, in order to prove by you what *is* that good and pleasing and perfect will of God.

What is Sin and What is The Law of Righteousness?

What is sin?

1 John 3:4 Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness.

Since sin is lawlessness and God expects righteousness, we should listen to the righteous book of the Law that we are told by Jehovah to practice.

Deuteronomy 30:10 for you shall listen to the voice of Jehovah your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the Law, *and* if you turn to Jehovah your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

The first five books of the bible, known in Hebrew as the Torah, contain the book of the Law. The most notable list of these statutes and judgements are known as “The 10 Commandments” and can be found in the Exodus chapter 20 and Deuteronomy chapter 5. Perhaps set this pamphlet aside and read these chapters now, as the Law of Yehovah contains words to live by.

Ezekiel 20:11 And I gave them My statutes and showed them My judgments, which *if* a man do, he shall even live in them.

If we want our prayers to be heard, we should not turn away from the Law. Other than a repentant confession of the sin, does God hear the prayers of one who violates even His 10 Commandments (ie: one who steals? Commits murder? does not keep the Sabbaths? Commits adultery? etc.)?

Proverbs 28:9 He who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *is* a hateful thing.

This is a strong statement, and some who are new to the scriptures might need to have the reassurance that the New Testament agrees with the Old Testament concerning this Law. Indeed, it does. So, Is the Law still good?

Romans 7:12 So indeed the Law *is* holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.

Did Jesus come to destroy this Law?

Matthew 5:17-19 Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, Till the heaven and the earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall in any way pass from the Law until all is fulfilled. Therefore whoever shall relax one of these commandments, the least, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven. But whoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of Heaven.

If you want to be called great in the kingdom of Heaven, the New Testament says to teach and do that which is written in the Law. In fact, this is what Jesus, Himself, said to do... if you love Him.

John 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Indeed, the scriptures speak often and well about the Law of our God. Much knowledge can be gain from reading His Law. Much understanding will be gained from obeying His Law; and, much wisdom will be give to those that do. If you need more understanding on His Law, perhaps pray as David did.

Psalms 119:18 Open my eyes, so that I may behold wonderful things out of Your Law.

Concerning this one chapter of Psalm 119, much can be learned concerning the Law from the whole of chapter 119 and is highly recommended as an immediate follow-up reading to this short study on prayer that you are now concluding.

Pray Without Ceasing

The Apostle Paul gives the following advice concerning prayer:

1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.

David mentions the following, also in Psalms chapter 119:

Psalms 119:164 I praise You seven times a day because of Your righteous judgments.

The prophet Daniel prayed three times a day according to the pattern of the morning, mid-day, and evening sacrificial offerings that were once given at the temple (see Danel 6:10, Psalm 141:2). This was his “daily sacrifice” of prayer. How much diligence will you to commit to prayer?

Are you willing to dedicate the temple of your body as a living sacrifice? Will you be a house of prayer? Are you willing to offer up your prayers from the alter of your heart such that your prayers become a continual incense reaching into heaven? Will your prayers erect a ladder into heaven?



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