

Our Prayers at Work
Revelation 8.2-6
Sunday January 19, 2025

Then I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. ³ And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne, ⁴ and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, rose before God from the hand of the angel. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and threw it on the earth, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

⁶ Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them.

- 6.9-11 (5th Seal) revealed the prayers of the martyrs
- 8.2-6 pauses to let us see the prayers of the saints at work
- Important to note this passage prologue to the vision of the 7 trumpets

Joel Beeke – 5 lessons of prayer

The Point of Prayer

Our passage to be understood in context of what has been revealed:

- Christ's taking of the scroll and opening the 7 seals = fulfillment of eternal decrees of Sovereign God

Question: what is the point of prayer?

Answer: God has ordained the end but also has ordained the means by which the end will happen

- That means is through the prayers of the saints!
- i.e.,
 - ***Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*** Eph.1.3-4
- God has ordained that people come to know Him but how do they do so?
 - ***How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*** Rom.10.14-15

Just as God uses preaching to bring his chosen to Him so He uses the prayers of His saints to carry out His eternal decrees!

The People Who Pray

³And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer, and he was given much incense to offer with the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar before the throne...

The saints: synonymous with “Christian,” set apart one, sanctified one

Those genuinely trusting Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord

- ***But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*** 1 Pe.2.9-10
- ***In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit...*** Eph.1.13
- ***For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!”¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,¹⁷ and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.*** Rm.8.15-17
 - Set apart from the world
 - Sealed with the Holy Spirit
 - Called to pursue holiness
 - Members of Christ’s Church
 - Belonging to God, adopted as children and heirs

Important to note:

The incense and golden altar depict the priestly work of Christ making atonement and intercession for His people (Ex.30.10)

Our prayers are heard through the merit of Jesus Christ and through Him alone!

The Presentation of our Prayers

Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. He.7.25

- The incense depicts the intercession of Christ
- Removes all that is wrong with our prayers (deceit, greed, error, selfishness) and transforms them to that which is acceptable to God the Father

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. Rm.8.26

- The Holy Spirit also intercedes, using His words

Important to note:

When in the throes of persecution – martyrdom, torture, prison, slander – God will hear the groans and sighs of His people through the intercessory work of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit!

The Potential of our Prayers

Now the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to blow them. 8.6

Note: 7 angels prepare to act ONLY after the presentation of the prayers of the saints

7 = number of completeness

And to which of the angels has he ever said, “Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation? He.1.13-14

- There are a multitude of angels prepared to carry out God’s answers to our prayers

And he lay down and slept under a broom tree. And behold, an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.” And he looked, and behold, there was at his head a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. And he ate and drank and lay down again. And the angel of the Lord came again a second time and touched him and said, “Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you.” 1 Kings 19.5-7

- Angel ministering to Elijah enabling him to complete his service

Angels understand that our prayers are to be taken seriously

The Power of Prayer

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. Then he prayed again, and heaven gave rain, and the earth bore its fruit. Jm.5.16-18

Our prayers are powerful and effective because God acts through them!

...and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake. 8.5

Indicate the presence of God ready to act (see Ex.19.16)

“Our prayers may make little impact to those who hear them in this world, but when they reach heaven, they are sent back as ‘reversed thunder.’ The power of prayer is truly immense.” **Derek Thomas**

