

Inspiring Prayers

There are not many prayers recorded in the scriptures in their entirety. The fathers of Israel often talked to their God, Yahweh Elohim, directly rather than offering prayers.

The prayers that are recorded are powerful as many are answered directly, with miracles. The miracles recorded must have occurred, as in some cases they change the fate of a nation, and always they carry the stamp of truth.

It is a sobering thought that in prayer we approach a Being that can instantly change the way things are, and who has power over our life and death. How should such a Being be addressed?

We have been given the answer: the Bible, a book with approved exemplar prayers written for our benefit. If we desire to serve the Creator of life, whose Hebrew name is *Yahweh* meaning '*He will be*', these are a good pattern to follow.

The Hebrew and Greek words for 'pray' and 'prayer' mean to intercede, beseech, and make supplication. These words imply an earnest seeking for good from another.

We are not told when the first prayer was offered, but they began to call, or to ask things, in the name of God when Seth's son, the promised 'seed' of Eve is born.

To Seth..also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of Yahweh. (Genesis 4:26)

Abraham made a habit and called on Yahweh at a special place, Bethel

Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of Yahweh. (Genesis 13:4)

We have been given the precise wording of a few prayers. Many are very short.

The time of the Fathers of Israel

Abraham prayed for deliverance for his nephew Lot when he was captured. After the victory, Abraham told the King of Sodom his vow,

“I have lift up mine hand unto Yahweh, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest you should say, I have made Abram rich” (Genesis 14:22-23)

Abraham taught his household to serve his God. So when his servant is sent on a mission to find a wife for Isaac, the servant prays,

O Yahweh God of my master Abraham, **I pray thee, send me good speed this day**, and show kindness unto my master Abraham.

Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also:

let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that you have shewed kindness unto my master. (Genesis 24:12-14)

And the servant is answered directly before he had finished praying.

Isaac was 40 years old when he took Rebekah to wife (Gen 25:20) Even though he knew he was the heir to a promise for multitudes to come from him he prays for a son.

Isaac intreated Yahweh for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. (Genesis 25:21)

He waited, but no son. So he prays and his prayer was answered. He was 60 years old when his sons were born! (Gen 25:26)

Jacob returning in distress and in fear of his brother Esau prays,

O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, Yahweh which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee:

I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands.

Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And you said, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude. (Genesis 32:9-12)

Jacob's answer is a home coming in peace, where Esau embraces him.

Moses

Moses is so great he speaks to Yahweh face to face. He is a mediator for his people and speaks of their behalf to Yahweh. Moses records his prayer for deliverance, saying to the Israelites that he fell down before the LORD forty days and forty nights, because the LORD had said he would destroy them. His prayer was:

O Lord GOD, destroy not thy people and thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob;

look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin:

Lest the land whence thou brought us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he has brought them out to slay them in the wilderness.

Yet they are thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and by thy stretched out arm. (Deu 9:25-29 KJV)

Moses also has left a prayer that was so great it became a Psalm: < A Prayer of Moses the man of God. > It is a prayer of a mediator, describing the work of a greater mediator, in the people of the earth.

Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Thou turn man to destruction; and say, Return, ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. Thou carry them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourishes, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withers.

For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.

The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Who knows the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil.

Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us:

and establish thou the work of our hands upon us;

yea, the work of our hands establish thou it. (Psalm90:1-17)



Time of the Judges

Samson when he was in battle and became thirsty after victory called on Yahweh and prayed,

Thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised? (Jdg 15:18-19)

God immediately made a hollow place in the jaw where water came out; and when Samson drank his spirit came again, and he revived. And Samson's final prayer in his life, which paralleled a tragedy, was in the house of the Philistines when he was blind. Leaning on their support piers he called unto Yahweh

O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes. (Jdg 16:28)

And strength is given to Samson and he pushes the supports down.

Hannah's prayer was for a son. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said,

O Yahweh of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child,

then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life,
and there shall no razor come upon his head.

(1Samuel 1:10-11)

The result is celebrated in another prayer of Hannah's, so famous later Elizabeth the mother of John the baptist quotes it to Mary the mother of Jesus.

My heart rejoices in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; **because I rejoice in thy salvation.**

There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren has born seven; and she that has many children is waxed feeble.

The LORD kills, and makes alive: he brings down to the grave, and brings up. The LORD makes poor, and makes rich: he brings low, and lifts up.

He raises up the poor out of the dust, and lifts up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he has set the world upon them.

He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

(1Sam 2:1-10 KJV)

Samuel did in fact bring salvation, for a time, from the Philistines, and certainly a national return to the service of Yahweh. Yet it is clear Hannah saw a greater deliverance, and was looking to a time when there would be a king of Yahweh's choosing who would be exalted. Hannah's mind was dwelling on great things.

The Kings

Saul, the first king, is not recorded as making any prayers, when in distress he did not wait for Samuel and rather than praying, he offers instead the sacrifice Samuel was to make.

His son Jonathan has a different spirit and Yahweh hears him when he speaks. Here he without any support but an armour bearer and his faith in Yahweh thinks to take on a whole garrison of the Philistines,

And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour, “Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that Yahweh will work for us: for there is no restraint to Yahweh to save by many or by few”.

And his armour bearer said unto him, “Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart”.

Then said Jonathan, “Behold, we will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. **If they say thus unto us**, 'Tarry until we come to you'; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. **But if they say thus**, 'Come up unto us'; then we will go up: for Yahweh has delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us.

And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines: and the Philistines ..the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armourbearer, and said, “Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing”. And Jonathan said unto his armourbearer, Come up after me: for Yahweh has delivered them into the hand of Israel. (1Samuel 14:6-12)

There was a great victory to Israel that day despite a lack of swords.

David was a man after Yahweh's own heart, and was a man of prayer. He left in the Psalms a personal prayer, but one for all his people.

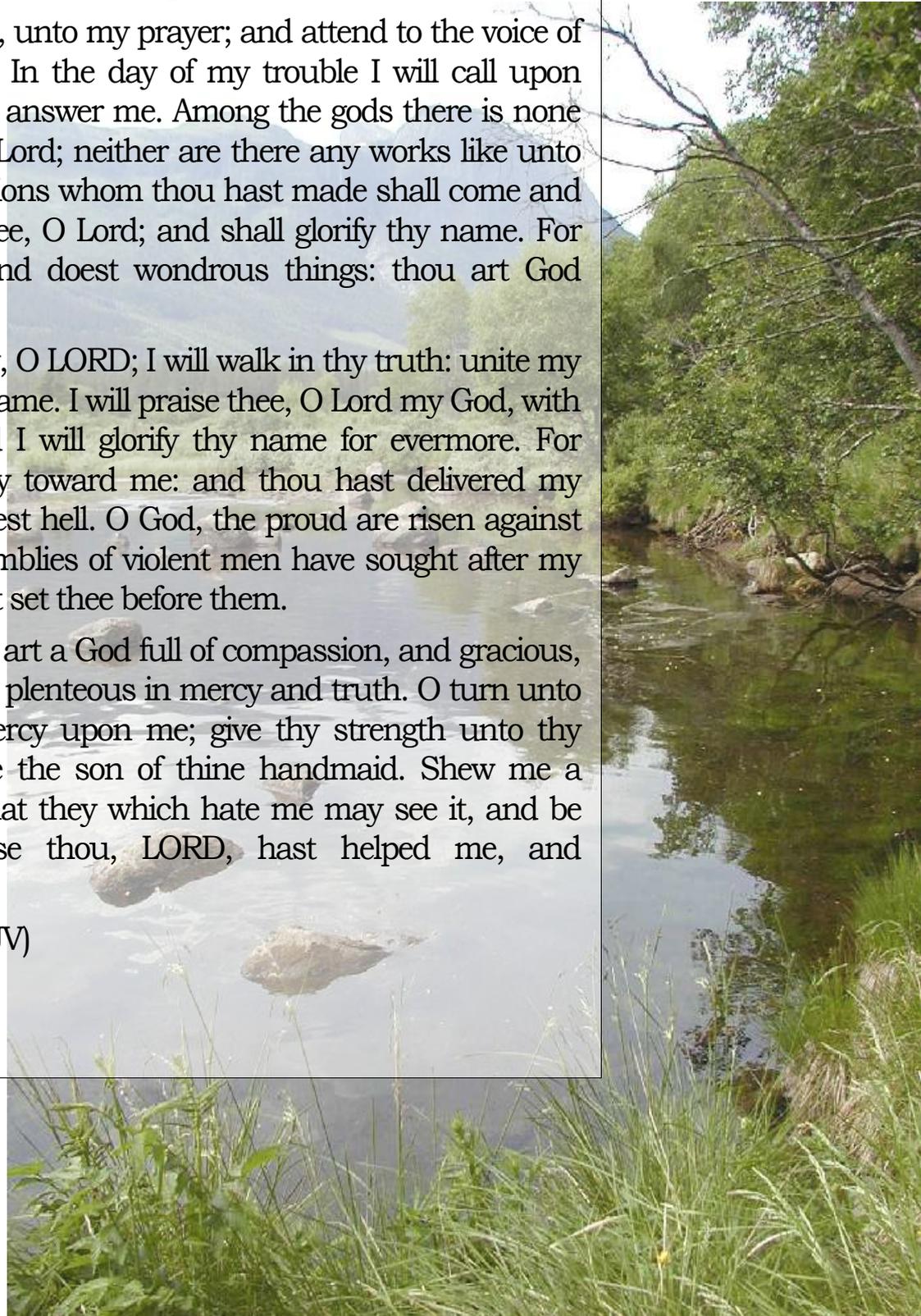
<A Prayer of David.> Bow down thine ear, O LORD, hear me: for I am poor and needy. Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusts in thee. Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily. Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Give ear, O LORD, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me. Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.

Teach me thy way, O LORD; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name. I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore. For great is thy mercy toward me: and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell. O God, the proud are risen against me, and the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul; and have not set thee before them.

But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me; give thy strength unto thy servant, and save the son of thine handmaid. Shew me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it, and be ashamed: because thou, LORD, hast helped me, and comforted me.

(Psalm 86:1-17 KJV)



David's prayer of praise after receiving the promises, like Hannah's, looks beyond to great things in the future. In the Hebrew, the record says David goes into the Tabernacle and 'dwells, sits' facing Yahweh Elohim. The Tabernacle includes no chair, so he knelt.

Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, know thy servant. For thy word's sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them.

Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemed to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.

And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee.

For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore has thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. And now, O Lord GOD, thou art that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken it: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever. (2Sam 7:18-29)

On the occasion where Solomon is made king, David praised Yahweh in a public prayer before those assembled.

Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.

Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.

But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness.

As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto thee. O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee:

And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision. (1Chronicles 29:10-20 KJV)

This prayer is answered in the work of Solomon, who builds the Temple and at the dedication of the temple makes a prayer for all time, that still has power today.

LORD God of Israel, there is no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keeps covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promised him: thou spake also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled it with thine hand, as it is this day.

Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promised him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. And now, O God of Israel, **let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.**

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded? Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer, which thy servant prays before thee to day:

That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou may hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hear, forgive.

If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house: Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gave unto their fathers.

When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflict them: Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be; What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house: Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou know; (for thou, even thou only, know the hearts of all the children of men;)

That they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gave unto our fathers.

Moreover concerning a stranger, that is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake; (For they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come and pray toward this house; Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calls to thee for: that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name.



If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, whithersoever thou shall send them, and shall pray unto the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and toward the house that I have built for thy name: Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause. If they sin against thee, (for there is no man that sins not,) and thou be angry with them, and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near;

Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness; And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name: Then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee, and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them:

For they be thy people, and thine inheritance, which thou brought forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron: That thine eyes may be open unto the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call for unto thee. For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spake by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.

(1Kings 8:23-53 (also 2 chronicles 6;14-42)

This prayer is answered directly. Fire comes down and consumes the sacrifice on the altar. And God himself says, “I have heard thy prayer, and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice... Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made towards this place” (2Ch 7:12-15)

Asa in battle with the Ethiopians cries to God.

LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee. (2Ch 14:11-12 KJV)

“So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled”.

Elijah on Carmel with the prophets of Baal

And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said,

LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, **that this people may know that thou art the LORD God**, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. (1Kings 18:36-38)

Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench.

Hezekiah begins reforms and calls those of the Northern Kingdom to join in, but having lost the ways of Yahweh they are not ritually clean

The good Yahweh pardon every one. That prepares his heart to seek God, Yahweh God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. (2 Chronicles 30:19-18)

And Yahweh hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.

Hezekiah's next prayer was made while in grave danger from the invasion of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, in the temple and said,

O LORD God of Israel, which dwell between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which has sent him to reproach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.

(2Kiings 19:15-19 KJV)

That night the angel of Yahweh destroys the Assyrian army. 185 thousand of them. But soon after Hezekiah is told he will die.

He prays facing the wall of the Temple. The house abutted the temple

I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore.

(2Kings 20:3 KJV)

Through the prophet Isaiah he was told Yahweh would add to his days 15 years. And he was given a sign of the sundial shadow going back 10 degrees.

The Time of the Prophets

A number of short prayers by Elisha have astounding results.

And when the servant of the man of God (Elisha) was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an (Syrian) host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? ..And Elisha prayed, and said,

LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see.

And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said,

Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness.

And he smote them with blindness..... And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria. ...when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said,

LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see.

And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria. ... So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel. (2Ki 6:15-23 KJV)

Daniel the prophet's first recorded prayer is in thanks. The king of Babylon's commandment was to kill all the wise men who could not reveal the king's dream. After prayer by Daniel and his three friends the dream was revealed, and Daniel prays in thanks.

Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changes the times and the seasons: he removes kings, and sets up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He reveals the deep and secret things: he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. **I thank thee, and praise thee**, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and **hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee**: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.

(Dan 2:20-23)

One of the most moving prayers is Daniel's for his people. "I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes"

And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.

O Lord, righteousness belongs unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee. O Lord, to us belongs confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; Neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses the servant of God, because we have sinned against him.

And he has confirmed his words, which he spake against us, and against our judges that judged us, by bringing upon us a great evil: for under the whole heaven has not been done as has been done upon Jerusalem. As it is written in the law of Moses, all this evil is come upon us: yet made we not our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities, and understand thy truth. Therefore has the LORD watched upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the LORD our God is righteous in all his works which he does: for we obeyed not his voice.

And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown, as at this day; we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.

Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake. O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies.

O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name. (Dan 9:4-19)

In the book of Daniel is recorded a prayer by Nebuchadnezzar. This is an amazing prayer made after his recovery. “And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and”

I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that lives for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (Daniel 4:34-35)



“Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase” (Daniel 4:37).

Nehemiah, before seeking to rebuild Jerusalem, like Daniel prays for his people,

And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keeps covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou may hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commanded thy servant Moses.

Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commanded thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. O

Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, *who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.*

(Nehemiah 1:5-11 KJV)

Nehemiah was still fearful making a request of the king, “So I prayed to the God of heaven” (Nehemiah 2:4). His request is granted and Nehemiah leads the rebuilding work. At the end of the work He contends for the right way and writes a short prayer,

Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof. (Nehemiah 13:14)

The Lord's prayer is a pattern, not a prayer in itself. There is the complete text of only one prayer in the New Testament: John's record of the Lord's last prayer for his servants. These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven,

Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

And now, **O Father**, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. **I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gave me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gave them me; and they have kept thy word.** Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.

Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled. And **now come I to thee;** and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou should take them out of the world, but **that thou should keep them from the evil.** They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

As **you** have sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

And *the glory which thou gavest me* I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou loved me before the foundation of the world. *O righteous Father*, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

And *I have declared unto them thy name*, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

(John 17:1-26)

In a time of trouble and of leavetaking, he was thinking of the unity of his disciples and their future work. In addition it was a prayer for every disciple since that time. It may be argued that very few understand this prayer. But it is as simple as every other prayer in the Bible as it means what it says.

Has it been answered? The son has been glorified, and some have understood what he meant by the statement that he had manifested his Father's name. But this prayer will not be fulfilled finally until, as Paul writes 'Christ in you: the hope of glory' (Colosians 1:27). It is still in the process of being fulfilled in the lives of those who understand.

We are told Jesus prayed often (Mark 6:46, Luke 6:12,9:18,28 11:1 at his baptism 3:21). There is a glimpse to what he prayed in his prayer on the night before his capture,

Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.
(Mark 14:36)

Luke records great drops of blood, and that he said,

Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. (Luke 22:42)

Matthew records he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying,

O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. (Mat 26:39)

And he went away again the second time, and prayed, saying,

O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. (Mat 26:42)

This prayer was answered as an angel strengthened him (Luke 22:43).

The Lord's prayer is a pattern that Jesus used to teach his disciples to pray, but there were other things that might be added as he also said,

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. (Mat 9:38, Luke 10:2)

pray for them which despitefully use you. (Luke 6:28)

At Olivet when speaking of the trials that would come on Jerusalem,

Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: (Mat 24:20, Mark 13:18)

Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man. (Luke 21:36)

James wrote,

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. (James 5:13)

The Apostle Paul was a man of prayer, and encouraged prayer. He points out that prayer must be with understanding,

For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. (1Cor 14:14)

Paul prayed for the Ephesians and asked the Ephesians to pray for his work, which was the gospel,

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication **for all saints**; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak. (Ephesians 6:18-20)

He prayed the Philipians might grow in knowledge,

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; (Php 1:8-9)

To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse,

Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (Col 1:2-9)

Paul to the Thessalonians in his first letters wrote “Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (1Thes. 5:16-18). In his second letter he ends,

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith. (2Theslonians 3:1-2)

This prayer is for the Gospel, that in the work of individuals, such as Paul and those who laboured with him, that the gospel go forth unhindered. Paul's letters themselves are evidence this prayer was answered.

The most succinct and comprehensive prayer, that of the greatest mind this world has seen, is that of the Lord Jesus. He never asked his disciples to recite this prayer. There is no evidence the Apostles repeated it. This is only a *pattern*. God desires our prayer not be rote but from the heart. Like the great people of old.

Jesus said “After this *manner* therefore pray ye”.

: Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.

Thy **kingdom** come. Thy will be done
in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we
forgive our debtors. And lead us not
into temptation, but deliver us from
evil: For thine is the **kingdom**, and
the power, and the glory, for ever.
Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13 KJV)



There is a simplicity and directness to all the prayers. These all show a deep reverence in the relationship in the way *Yahweh Elohim* or *He will be Mighty Ones* is addressed, yet at the same time a confidence that there is nothing too great that may be asked for.

The faith building aspect of a study of prayer in scripture is the remarkable way in which the prayers are answered, with often miraculous events. The people whose prayers are recorded know and love Yahweh's word, as every prayer speaks confidently of what Yahweh has done in the past and his plan with the earth.

The power of prayer seems not to be the words we may use but the simple faith that we are speaking to the power of the universe whose power is so great it can change the world.