

TIPPING THE BALANCE OF POWER

MAKING SENSE OF HOW, WHEN AND WHY PRAYER WORKS

PRAYER IS AN ACT OF WAR. When we pray we are marshalling divine forces to bear upon a given situation. Prayer is not a means of persuading God to do good things for us that He would otherwise be unwilling to do, but rather the means by which we, as free agents, open the door for God to do for us what He wanted to do all along. Even so, in addition to the individual free will of the one offering any given prayer, must be factored in the free wills of all the other humans and angels whose choices bear upon each particular request. To the question, “Why did this particular tragedy occur and that particular tragedy prevented, when, in both instances, individual persons prayed for God’s intervention?” no specific answer can be given. To give a specific answer as to why any specific prayer is answered or not answered, we would have to possess an exhaustive knowledge of all the variables—factors and counter-factors—involved in the immediate and distant history of all the individual lives that have had any contributing influence on the situation. The mystery as to why one prayer is answered and not another, why one tragic event is prevented and not another, lies in the complexity of a war torn world shaped by a multitude of intersecting free wills. The mystery does not lie in God’s character or will. God always does all the good He can to the degree that the way in opened to Him.

Revelation 3:20— Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Contending Forces

Daniel 10—2In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 3I ate no pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled. . . . 12From the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13“But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. . . . 20Now I must return to fight with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. 21No one upholds me against these, except Michael your prince.

A Wall of Protective Custody

Job 1:9-10, CEV—9“Why shouldn’t he respect you?” Satan remarked. 10“You are like a wall protecting not only him, but his entire family and all his property.”

Zechariah 2:5—For I, says the LORD, will be a wall of fire all around her, and I will be the glory in her midst.

Zechariah 9:8—I will camp around My house because of the army, because of him who passes by and him who returns. No more shall an oppressor pass through them, for now I have seen with My eyes.

Psalms 34:7—The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, and delivers them.

2 Kings 6:17—Elisha prayed, and said, “LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

NOTE: Parallel truth—The cross of Christ did not persuade God to love us, but rather Christ died on the cross because God already loved us.

A Storm Against The Wall

Isaiah 25:3-4—**3**The strong people will glorify You; the city of the terrible nations will fear You. **4**For You have been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shade from the heat; for the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

Isaiah 30:13—This iniquity shall be to you like a breach ready to fall, a bulge in a high wall, whose breaking comes suddenly, in an instant.

Numbers 22:31—Then the LORD opened Balaam’s eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face.

Moral Speak

John 14:30—The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.

Ezekiel 22:23-30, NRSV—**23**The word of the LORD came to me: **24**Mortal, say to it: You are a land that is not cleansed, not rained upon in the day of indignation. **25**Its princes within it are like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they have devoured human lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows within it. **26**Its priests have done violence to my teaching and have profaned my holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the common, neither have they taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have disregarded my sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. **27**Its officials within it are like wolves tearing the prey, shedding blood, destroying lives to get dishonest gain. **28**Its prophets have smeared whitewash on their behalf, seeing false visions and divining lies for them, saying, “Thus says the Lord GOD,” when the LORD has not spoken. **29**The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery; they have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the alien without redress. **30**And I sought for anyone among them who would repair the wall and stand in the breach before me on behalf of the land, so that I would not destroy it; but I found no one.

Genesis 19:13—We will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it.

Human Authority Trumps The Demonic

Ephesians 6:10-12—**10**Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. **11**Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. **12**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

1 Peter 5:8-9—**8**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. **9**Resist him, steadfast in the faith.

James 4:7—Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

NOTE: “. . .the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places” (NRSV).

“Behold Your God”—Isaiah 40:9