

Answered Prayer

Opening Announcements

Opening Prayer

Q: Have you ever seen God answer your prayer? Share what happened!

Q: Have you ever seen God NOT answer your prayer? Share what happened?

Q: Have you ever seen God answer prayer, but not in the way you were asking? Share that!

READ: Revelation 8:1- 5 "When the Lamb opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² 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."

Q: What strikes you about this vision? What did you notice about it?

Q: Notice the "time" reference in verse 1. What is THAT about?

Q: Notice the "number seven". Bring to mind any other times related to "seven"?

Q: Are there any other times in the Bible when God is "silent"?

POINT: Scholars believe that this "silence" represents an interlude between events. Perhaps structurally distinguishing Revelation 6-7 and Revelation 8-11. Jewish Rabbinic tradition and the Apocrypha books of 4 Ezra (from the Vulgate) holds that God was silent before God "spoke" and thus created light. This also highlights the idea of silence before creation, the silence between the testaments, the silence of the grave before the resurrection, the time just before the return of Christ, etc. Others suggest

that this is akin to the silence that comes over a courtroom when a Judge enters the chamber. Regardless, it's a relatively "short period" of time.

Q: According to verse 2, the angels were given trumpets. What are trumpets used for?

The "Other Angel"

Q: According to verse 3-4, "another angel" enters the scene. What is his role?

READ: Psalm 141:1-2 "O Lord, I call upon you; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to you! ² **Let my prayer be counted as incense before you**, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!

READ: Philippians 4:18 "I have received full payment, and more. I am well supplied, having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, **a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.**"

Q: In the above passages, how do they help us understand how the Bible often uses the imagery of 'incense' and prayers together?

NOTICE: In verse 4 the prayers go up "from the hand of the angel". This is "analogous" of the priest in the temple offering prayers for the people.

Q: According to verse 5, the angel does something! What is it and what does it mean?

Q: How does this act seem to usher in the next vision of judgment?

Q: What is the connection of our prayers and God's judgment?

Q: Why is it often hard for us to believe that God answers prayers?

Q: According to this text, clearly God DOES respond to the prayers of His people! What's His response?

Q: How can this be comforting? Humbling? Sobering? Motivating?

Q: What's ONE thing you can do to help your prayer life?

A Great Quote To Meditate On: "God always answers our prayers, in the way we would want Him to, IF we knew what He knows" - Tim Keller - "Walking With God Through Pain and Suffering"