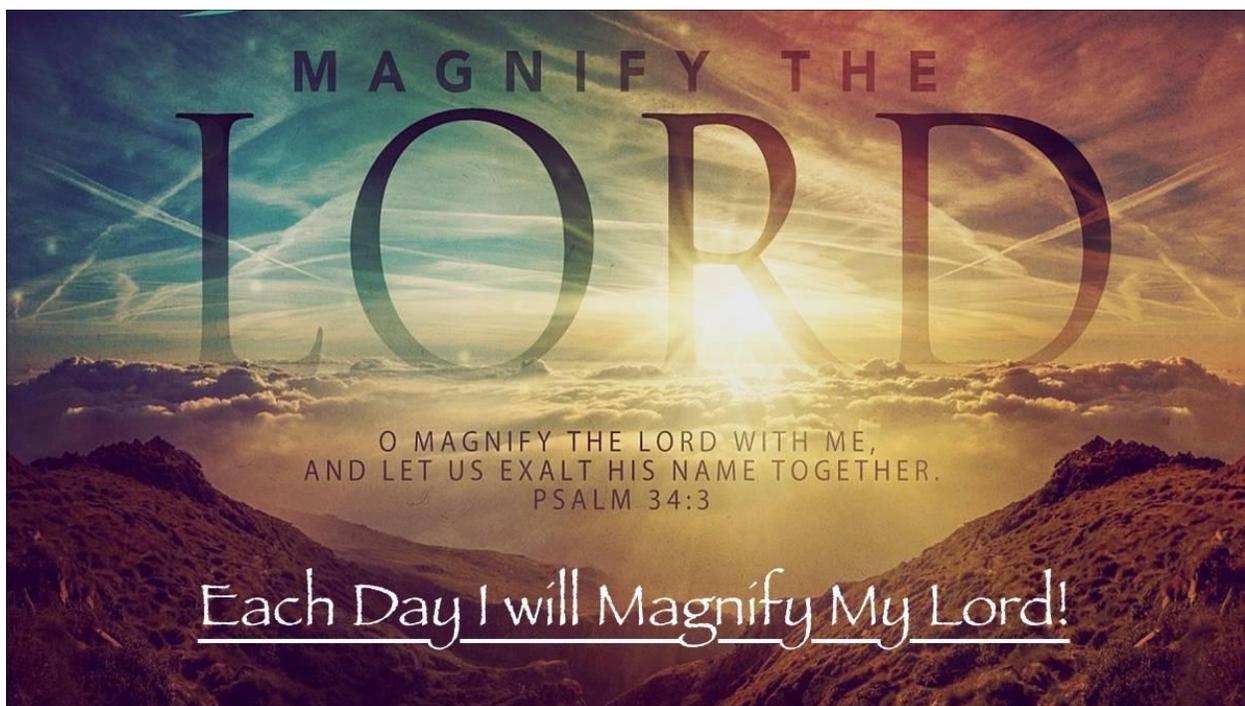

FROM RITUAL TO REALITY: PRAYER IN PRACTICE

Sunday: Prayers in the Bible



Prepared by Jonathan Caldwell

3rd Quarter 2021

www.wearesimplychristians.com

INTRODUCTION

“Each day I’ll magnify my God!” As we think about our daily relationship with God and the fact that He desires those who worship Him in spirit and truth, we want to think about prayer. Prayer should be an integral part of our lives and, yet, I know that I do not spend enough time in prayer. Why is that? Do we doubt its efficacy? Do we doubt that God is listening? Do we simply forget? Maybe it is that we do not know how to pray.

I have wrestled all year with what to do this quarter. There is a really good book written by Edwin Crozier, entitled *Plugged In: High Voltage Prayer*, that is really good. I considered using that as a class book. I highly recommend it! But I decided to stick with the text of scripture. If we want to learn about prayer, let’s dig into the prayers of God’s people. How did David pray? How did the prophets pray? How did Paul pray? How did Jesus pray?

On Sundays, as we work through the various prayers found in scripture, we will follow a pattern: we will note the context of the prayer, the attitude of the one praying, the specific requests being made, and the application for us. Each lesson has the text of the prayer on the page. I suggest you mark it up like we have done for Proverbs and the Psalms. Dig into the text. Ask questions. Make connections. In our Sunday classes we will go through these prayers and include other, topical information as well.

On Wednesdays, we will study the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. (You will notice that this is a two-sided book. Sunday is on one side. Flip it over and you will find Wednesday.) As the Israelites returned to the promised land and worked to reestablish worship according to the word of God, prayer was an essential aspect of their lives and work. There should be plenty of application for us in these books.

I am looking forward to this study because I know that I, personally, need it. I miss talking to my dad. We used to talk every day. I should desire and cultivate such a relationship with my heavenly father. Maybe this quarter can help us to do that!

Jonathan Caldwell

From Ritual to Reality: Prayer in Practice

Sunday: Prayers in the Bible

Schedule of Lessons

Date	Topic	Passages
Sunday, July 4	1. Jacob – “Deliver and bless me”	Genesis 32
Sunday, July 11	2. Moses – “Pardon this people”	Numbers 14:11-23
Sunday, July 18	3. Hannah – “I have been pouring out my soul”	1 Samuel 1:10-11; 2:1-10
Sunday, July 25	4. David – “Who am I?” and “Who are we?”	2 Samuel 7:18-29 1 Chronicles 29:10-19
Sunday, August 1	5. Solomon – “May your eyes be open”	1 Kings 8:22-53
Sunday, August 8	6. Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah – “Our eyes are on you”	2 Chronicles 20:5-12 2 Kings 19:14-19
Sunday, August 15	7. Jonah – “Salvation belongs to the Lord”	Jonah 2:1-9
Sunday, August 22	8. Habakkuk – “How long?”	Habakkuk 1-3
Sunday, August 29	9. Jeremiah – “Nothing is too hard for you”	Jeremiah 32:16-28
Sunday, September 5	10. Daniel – “Because of your great mercy”	Daniel 9:3-19
Sunday, September 12	11. Jesus – “The hour has come”	John 17
Sunday, September 19	12. Jesus – “Your will be done”	Matthew 6:5-15; Matthew 26:36-46
Sunday, September 26	13. Paul’s Prayers for the Churches	1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 Ephesians 1:15-23 Ephesians 3:14-21 Philippians 1:3-11 Colossians 1:9-14

JACOB – “DELIVER ME” & “BLESS ME”

Text: Genesis 32

<p>“And Jacob said, ‘O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD who said to me, ‘Return to your country and to your kindred, that I may do you good,’ I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. Please deliver me from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, that he may come and attack me, the mothers with the children. But you said, ‘I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.’”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Genesis 32:9–12</p>	What is the happening in this chapter?
	What, specifically, has provoked this prayer?
	How does Jacob express his humility?
	What is Jacob’s request?
	What application can we take from this prayer?

This is also the chapter where Jacob wrestles with God (or an angel or someone).

- How is that episode like a prayer?
- What does Jacob request?
- What application can we take from that?

MOSES – “PARDON THIS PEOPLE”

Text: Numbers 14:11-23

<p>“But Moses said to the LORD, ‘Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for you brought up this people in your might from among them, and they will tell the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that you, O LORD, are in the midst of this people. For you, O LORD, are seen face to face, and your cloud stands over them and you go before them, in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. Now if you kill this people as one man, then the nations who have heard your fame will say, ‘It is because the LORD was not able to bring this people into the land that he swore to give to them that he has killed them in the wilderness.’ And now, please let the power of the Lord be great as you have promised, saying, ‘The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.’ Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now.’”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Numbers 14:13–19</p>	<p>What is the happening in this chapter?</p>
	<p>What, specifically, has provoked this prayer?</p>
	<p>To what does Moses appeal?</p>
	<p>What is Moses’ request?</p>
<p>What application can we take from this prayer?</p>	

HANNAH – “I POUR OUT MY SOUL”

Text: 1 Samuel 1:10-11; 2:1-10

<p>“She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, ‘O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.’”</p>	<p>What is the happening in this chapter?</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">1 Samuel 1:10–11</p> <p>“And Hannah prayed and said, ‘My heart exults in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s, and on them he has set the world. He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.’”</p>	<p>What, specifically, has provoked these prayers?</p>
<p>1 Samuel 1:10–11</p> <p>“And Hannah prayed and said, ‘My heart exults in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s, and on them he has set the world. He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.’”</p>	<p>What is the main thrust of Hannah’s prayer?</p>
<p>1 Samuel 1:10–11</p> <p>“And Hannah prayed and said, ‘My heart exults in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s, and on them he has set the world. He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.’”</p>	<p>How does her prayer of exultation fit Hannah’s situation?</p>
<p>1 Samuel 2:1–10</p> <p>“The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.”</p>	<p>What application can we take from this prayer?</p>

DAVID – “WHO AM I?”

Text: 2 Samuel 7:18-29; 1 Chronicles 29:10-19 (next page)

<p>“Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and said, ‘Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far? And yet this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord GOD. You have spoken also of your servant’s house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord GOD! And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Lord GOD! Because of your promise, and according to your own heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. Therefore you are great, O LORD God. For there is none like you, and there is no God besides you, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And who is like your people Israel, the one nation on earth whom God went to redeem to be his people, making himself a name and doing for them great and awesome things by driving out before your people, whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt, a nation and its gods? And you established for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever. And you, O LORD, became their God. And now, O LORD God, confirm forever the word that you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken. And your name will be magnified forever, saying, ‘The LORD of hosts is God over Israel,’ and the house of your servant David will be established before you. For you, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant, saying, ‘I will build you a house.’ Therefore your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. And now, O Lord GOD, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant. Now therefore may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you, O Lord GOD, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever.’”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">2 Samuel 7:18–29</p>	<p>What is the happening in this chapter?</p>
	<p>What, specifically, has provoked this prayer?</p>
	<p>What is David’s attitude?</p>
	<p>What is David’s request?</p>
	<p>What application can we take from this prayer?</p>

<p>“Therefore David blessed the LORD in the presence of all the assembly. And David said: ‘Blessed are you, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, forever and ever. Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all. And now we thank you, our God, and praise your glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own. I know, my God, that you test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. In the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen your people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to you. O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of your people, and direct their hearts toward you. Grant to Solomon my son a whole heart that he may keep your commandments, your testimonies, and your statutes, performing all, and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision.’”</p> <p>1 Chronicles 29:10–19</p>	<p>What is the happening in this chapter?</p>
	<p>What, specifically, has provoked this prayer?</p>
	<p>What is David’s attitude?</p>
	<p>How is this prayer like the first?</p>
	<p>What application can we take from this prayer?</p>

JEHOSHAPHAT AND HEZEKIAH – “OUR EYES ARE ON YOU”

Text: 2 Chronicles 20:5-12; 2 Kings 19:14-19 (next page)

<p>“And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, and said, ‘O LORD, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you. Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? And they have lived in it and have built for you in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, ‘If disaster comes upon us, the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before you—for your name is in this house—and cry out to you in our affliction, and you will hear and save.’ And now behold, the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom you would not let Israel invade when they came from the land of Egypt, and whom they avoided and did not destroy— behold, they reward us by coming to drive us out of your possession, which you have given us to inherit. O our God, will you not execute judgment on them? For we are powerless against this great horde that is coming against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">2 Chronicles 20:5–12</p>	<p>What is the happening in this chapter?</p>
	<p>What, specifically, has provoked this prayer?</p>
	<p>What is Jehoshaphat’s attitude?</p>
	<p>What is Jehoshaphat’s request?</p>
<p>What application can we take from this prayer?</p>	

<p>“Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD and spread it before the LORD. And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD and said: ‘O LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned above the cherubim, you are the God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. Incline your ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands and have cast their gods into the fire, for they were not gods, but the work of men’s hands, wood and stone. Therefore they were destroyed. So now, O LORD our God, save us, please, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O LORD, are God alone.’”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">2 Kings 19:14–19</p>	<p>What is the happening in this chapter?</p>
	<p>What, specifically, has provoked this prayer?</p>
	<p>What is Hezekiah’s attitude?</p>
	<p>What is Hezekiah’s request?</p>
<p>How is this prayer like the first?</p>	

JONAH – “SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD”

Text: Jonah 2:1-9

<p>“Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, saying, ‘I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. Then I said, ‘I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.’ The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jonah 2:1–9</p>	<p>What is the happening in this chapter?</p>
	<p>What, specifically, has provoked this prayer?</p>
	<p>What is Jonah’s attitude?</p>
	<p>Jonah’s had already been saved when he prays this prayer. What does Jonah now promise?</p>
	<p>What application can we take from this prayer?</p>

JEREMIAH – “NOTHING IS TOO HARD FOR YOU”

Text: Jeremiah 32:16-28

<p>“After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying: ‘Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you. You show steadfast love to thousands, but you repay the guilt of fathers to their children after them, O great and mighty God, whose name is the LORD of hosts, great in counsel and mighty in deed, whose eyes are open to all the ways of the children of man, rewarding each one according to his ways and according to the fruit of his deeds. You have shown signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, and to this day in Israel and among all mankind, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day. You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and outstretched arm, and with great terror. And you gave them this land, which you swore to their fathers to give them, a land flowing with milk and honey. And they entered and took possession of it. But they did not obey your voice or walk in your law. They did nothing of all you commanded them to do. Therefore you have made all this disaster come upon them. Behold, the siege mounds have come up to the city to take it, and because of sword and famine and pestilence the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans who are fighting against it. What you spoke has come to pass, and behold, you see it. Yet you, O Lord GOD, have said to me, ‘Buy the field for money and get witnesses’ —though the city is given into the hands of the Chaldeans.’”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Jeremiah 32:16–25</p>	<p>What is the happening in this chapter?</p>
	<p>What, specifically, has provoked this prayer?</p>
	<p>What is Jeremiah’s attitude?</p>
	<p>What seems to be Jeremiah’s trouble?</p>
	<p>What application can we take from this prayer?</p>

DANIEL – “BECAUSE OF YOUR GREAT MERCY”

Text: Daniel 9:3-19 (two pages)

<p>“Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, ‘O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to</p>	<p>What is the happening in this chapter?</p>
	<p>What, specifically, has provoked this prayer?</p>

obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth. Therefore the LORD has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly. O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name.”

Daniel 9:3–19

What is Daniel’s attitude?

What is Daniel’s request?

What application can we take from this prayer?

JESUS – “THE HOUR HAS COME”

Text: John 17

<p>“When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, ‘Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father,</p>	<p>What is the happening in this chapter?</p>
	<p>What, specifically, has provoked this prayer?</p>

keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

John 17:1–26

What is Jesus' attitude?

What are Jesus' main requests?

What application can we take from this prayer?

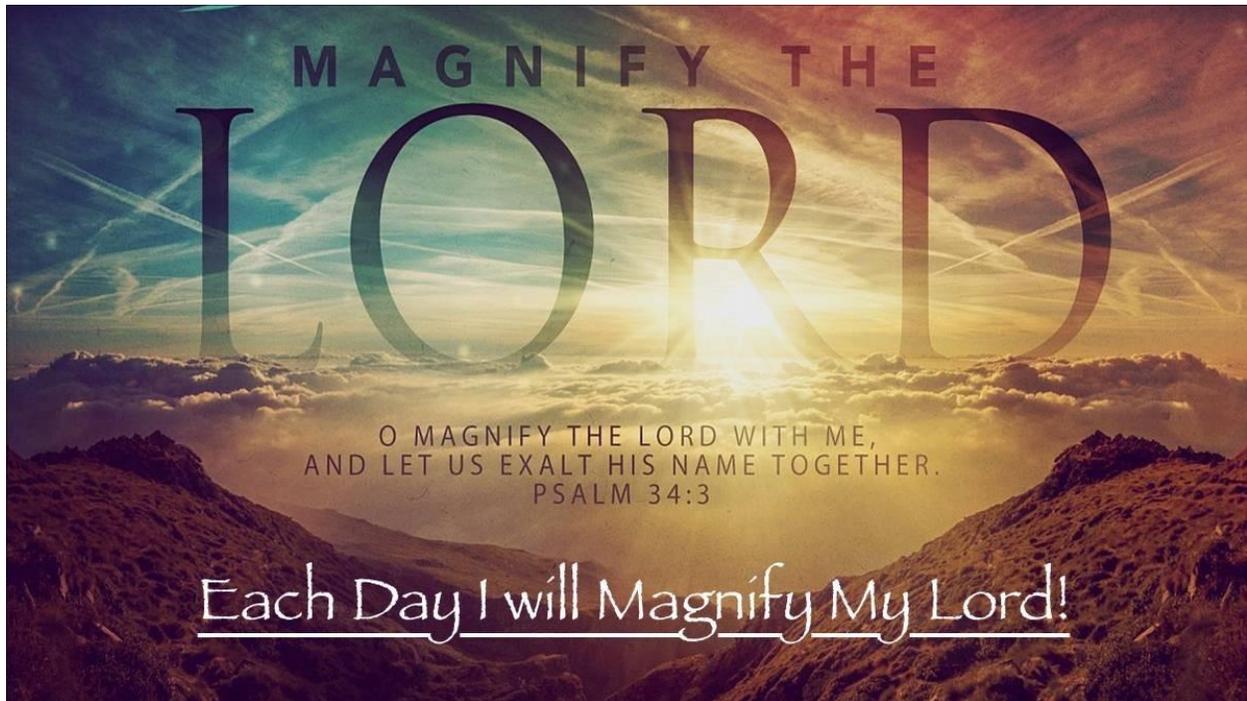
JESUS – “YOUR WILL BE DONE”

Text: Matthew 6:5-15; Matthew 26:36-46

<p>“Pray then like this: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.’”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Matthew 6:9–13</p> <p>“And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.’”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Matthew 26:39</p> <p>“Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.””</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Matthew 26:42</p>	<p>What is the happening in these chapters?</p>
	<p>What, specifically, has provoked these prayers?</p>
	<p>What is Jesus’ attitude?</p>
	<p>Whose mind is changed in prayer?</p>
<p>What application can we take from these prayers?</p>	

FROM RITUAL TO REALITY: PRAYER IN PRACTICE

Wednesday: Prayer in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther



Prepared by Jonathan Caldwell

3rd Quarter 2021

www.wearesimplychristians.com

INTRODUCTION

“Each day I’ll magnify my God!” As we think about our daily relationship with God and the fact that He desires those who worship Him in spirit and truth, we want to think about prayer. Prayer should be an integral part of our lives and, yet, I know that I do not spend enough time in prayer. Why is that? Do we doubt its efficacy? Do we doubt that God is listening? Do we simply forget? Maybe it is that we do not know how to pray.

I have wrestled all year with what to do this quarter. There is a really good book written by Edwin Crozier, entitled *Plugged In: High Voltage Prayer*, that is really good. I considered using that as a class book. I highly recommend it! But I decided to stick with the text of scripture. If we want to learn about prayer, let’s dig into the prayers of God’s people. How did David pray? How did the prophets pray? How did Paul pray? How did Jesus pray?

On Sundays, as we work through the various prayers found in scripture, we will follow a pattern: we will note the context of the prayer, the attitude of the one praying, the specific requests being made, and the application for us. Each lesson has the text of the prayer on the page. I suggest you mark it up like we have done for Proverbs and the Psalms. Dig into the text. Ask questions. Make connections. In our Sunday classes we will go through these prayers and include other, topical information as well.

On Wednesdays, we will study the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. (You will notice that this is a two-sided book. Sunday is on one side. Flip it over and you will find Wednesday.) As the Israelites returned to the promised land and worked to reestablish worship according to the word of God, prayer was an essential aspect of their lives and work. There should be plenty of application for us in these books.

I am looking forward to this study because I know that I, personally, need it. I miss talking to my dad. We used to talk every day. I should desire and cultivate such a relationship with my heavenly father. Maybe this quarter can help us to do that!

Jonathan Caldwell

From Ritual to Reality: Prayer in Practice

Wednesday: Prayer in Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther

Schedule of Lessons

Date	Topic	Passages
Wednesday, July 7	1. Overview of Divided Kingdom and Captivity	
Wednesday, July 14	2. Return from Captivity; Rebuilding the Temple	Ezra 1-3
Wednesday, July 21	3. Opposition to and Completion of the Work	Ezra 4-6
Wednesday, July 28	4. The Work of Ezra	Ezra 7-10
Wednesday, August 4	5. Overview of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi	Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi
Wednesday, August 11	6. Nehemiah Returns to Jerusalem to Rebuild the Wall	Nehemiah 1-3
Wednesday, August 18	7. Dealing with Opposition	Nehemiah 4-7
Wednesday, August 25	8. A Covenant with God	Nehemiah 8-10
Wednesday, September 1	9. Dedication of the Wall	Nehemiah 11-13
Wednesday, September 8	10. Esther Made Queen	Esther 1-2
Wednesday, September 15	11. Haman's Plot against the Jews	Esther 3-4
Wednesday, September 22	12. Esther Reveals Haman's Plot	Esther 5-7
Wednesday, September 29	13. The Jews Defend Themselves and the Feast of Purim	Esther 8-10

OVERVIEW OF THE DIVIDED KINGDOM AND CAPTIVITY

This lesson serves as an introduction to our Wednesday study of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.

- What led to the division of the United Kingdom under Rehoboam?
- What was the Northern Kingdom called and where was its capital?
- What was the Southern Kingdom called and where was its capital?
- Which kings were considered good kings?
- To whom were all the kings of the North compared?
- Who conquered the Northern Kingdom and in what year did it happen?
- Who conquered the Southern Kingdom and in what year did it happen?
- During the captivity, where were the prophets Daniel, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah?
- Consider Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Daniel 2: what nations would follow Babylon?
- How long were the people in captivity?

RETURN FROM CAPTIVITY; REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

Text: Ezra 1-3

- Which prophet mentions Cyrus by name 150 years before he was born?
- What motivated Cyrus to release the captives?
- What was returned to the Israelites before they returned to Judah?
- Why were certain men excluded from the priesthood until the Urim and Thummim could be consulted?
- How many people returned to Israel?
- The people came together in the seventh month and rebuilt the altar. What feasts are in the seventh month?
- Which two men act as leaders of the people?
- After the foundation of the temple was laid, the people worshipped God “according to” what?

OPPOSITION TO AND COMPLETION OF THE WORK

Text: Ezra 4-6

- Please note that this book begins in the time of Cyrus. Ezra 4:5 mentions Cyrus and Darius, but the letter is addressed to Artaxerxes who is much later. The point of placing this letter here (out of chronological order) is to show that the Israelites faced opposition to their mission constantly throughout the rebuilding process. Notice that verse 24, picks up the chronology left off in verse 5.
- The letter written to Artaxerxes claims that the Israelites are what kind of people?
- What prophets were involved in the rebuilding process? What was their role?
- Who poses a problem to the work in chapter 5? What is he looking for?
- Did the Israelites understand their recent history of destruction and captivity?
- According to the decree of Cyrus, who was to pay for the temple?
- What is Darius's response to Tattenai?
- Would Passover carry extra significance after the Babylonian captivity?

THE WORK OF EZRA

Text: Ezra 7-10

- Who is Ezra? How long did it take him to get to Jerusalem? What was his goal?
- What instructions does Artaxerxes give to the recipients of his letter?
- Who was missing from Ezra's group?
- Why didn't Ezra ask the king for protection on their journey?
- What upset Ezra after arriving in the Promised Land? Where is the prohibition for this activity in scripture?
- How do the people respond?
- What was the plan to deal with this problem?
- How was the foreign marriage issue a bad and good sign for the people?

AN OVERVIEW OF HAGGAI, ZECHARIAH, AND MALACHI

Text: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi

For this class, I recommend you read Haggai and Malachi (they are only 6 chapters) and skim the strange book of Zechariah.

- Who was Haggai?
- What was Haggai's main complaint against the people?
- Who was Malachi?
- What was Malachi's main complaint against the people?
- What famous prophecy does Malachi make in chapter 4?
- How would you define the book of Zechariah?
- What scenes stick out to you?
- What is the purpose of all the weirdness in Zechariah?

NEHEMIAH RETURNS TO JERUSALEM TO BUILD THE WALL

Text: Nehemiah 1-3

- In what shape is the remnant of God's people?
- Who does Nehemiah blame for their current condition?
- Who was Nehemiah?
- What role does the cupbearer serve?
- What does Nehemiah do before making his request to the king?
- Who is introduced as the opposition?
- What is said of the people in chapter 2 before they begin the work?
- Why might the priests be listed first in chapter 3?

DEALING WITH OPPOSITION

Text: Nehemiah 4-7

- How did Sanballat and Tobiah oppose the Jews?
- What was Nehemiah's response?
- According to 4:6, why were the people able to succeed in building the wall?
- What was the plan to continue the work while preventing an attack?
- What passages prohibit exacting interest from a fellow Israelite?
- How does Nehemiah lead by example?
- What characteristic does Nehemiah show in chapter 6?
- Who are the people listed in chapter 7?
- Why are the genealogies of Nehemiah 7 so important?

A COVENANT WITH GOD

Text: Nehemiah 8-10

- How long did the people spend listening to the word of God?
- How did the people know to celebrate the Feast of Booths?
- In what activity do the people participate in chapter 9?
- What groups of people signed the covenant?
- What promise is made concerning their children?
- What promise is made concerning the Sabbath and interest?
- The second half of chapter 10 outlines the promises of the people to provide for what?
- Is this a new covenant the people make with God?

DEDICATION OF THE WALL

Text: Nehemiah 11-13

- According to chapter 11, who stayed in Jerusalem? Why?
- What did the people do to celebrate the completion of the wall around Jerusalem?
- Did Nehemiah develop new plans for temple service? How did they know what to do?
- Nehemiah 13:1-3 reflects back to what story in Ezra?
- Why didn't Nehemiah prevent the evil of Eliashib?
- Why had the Levites abandoned their posts?
- What did Nehemiah do to prevent the people from buying and selling on the Sabbath?
- Did the people keep the covenant they made with God?

ESTHER MADE QUEEN

Text: Esther 1-2

- Who is king? Over what people? Where is the capital?
- What command did the king make of Vashti?
- What responses were made to her refusal?
- How is Vashti to be replaced?
- Who is Mordecai? Who is Hadassah?
- Two facts are introduced to the story and will come into play later. Esther is of what nationality? And the women only go in to the king if they are _____.
- What plan did Mordecai discover?
- Thought question: Why were Esther and Mordecai Still in Persia?

HAMAN'S PLOT AGAINST THE JEWS

Text: Esther 3-4

- What did Mordecai do to upset Haman?
- How does Haman convince the king to destroy the Jews? How does he sweeten the pot?
- What was to be done to the Jews? Which Jews?
- Who acts as messenger between Mordecai and Esther?
- Why is Esther hesitant to go to the king?
- What statement of Mordecai's leads us to think about the providence of God?
- Esther seems to agree to approach the king, but what does she plan to do first?

ESTHER REVEALS HAMAN'S PLOT

Text: Esther 5-7

- What does the king offer Esther?
- What is Esther's request at the first feast?
- What does Haman plan to do with Mordecai?
- Why is the king reminded of what Mordecai had done for him?
- How is Haman humiliated before Mordecai?
- What is the king's response to discovering Haman's villainy?
- How was Haman punished?
- What passage(s) teach that the one who lays the trap will fall into it?

THE JEWS DEFEND THEMSELVES AND THE FEAST OF PURIM

Text: Esther 8-10

- To what place is Mordecai promoted?
- Why can't the king undo what Haman planned?
- Haman's plan was still scheduled but what were the Jews allowed to do (by the King's authority)?
- Who helped the Jews defend themselves?
- How many enemies were killed?
- Where does the word "Purim" come from? What kind of holiday was it?
- How many times does this book mention God?
- What other Bible heroes are elevated to second in command?