

Problem Prayer Promises

By Arthur Watkins

There are a number of prayer promises in the scriptures that have caused problems for Christians for many years. Many Christians have claimed these prayer promises that never came to pass. Because they do not come to pass their faith in God and his word is shaken. There are Christians who have come to doubt the word of God after claiming these promises that did not work for them. In these promises God said he would do certain things for those who prayed, but when Christians claim them today, they find that God does not do for them what he promised. Once you see these promises you will understand why they present such a problem.

The people who urge Christians to claim these prayer promises today are the Pentacostalists and Charismatics. They emphasize these prayer promises in their sermons and books. They teach people that if they claim these prayer promises God is obligated to answer them all. They say if you can name it, then you can claim it. But when people name them they are not claiming them; their prayers are not being answered which has caused many people to become bitter and even depart from the faith and you will see why in this study.

(a) John 14:13-14: And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

This is a promise that Christ would do anything they asked the Father to do in his name. He put no limits or restrictions on their requests. It is as if he handed them a check book and invited them to write any size check they wanted.

Has God done everything you asked him to do in Christ's name in prayer? Have any of your prayers been unanswered? Can't you see what a promise like this would do to a person who claimed it today?

(b) John 15:7: If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

This is another promise that God would do anything they asked him to in prayer. It's an open invitation to get every thing they willed, wanted or wished for in prayer. There are no restrictions or limits. He said; "*ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you*".

Have you gotten everything that you willed or wanted or wished for in prayer? Why not?

(c) John 16:16: Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

This is another prayer promise that God would give them whatsoever they asked for. The only requirement was to ask for it in Christ's name.

Has God ever turned down any request you made to him in prayer? Has God refused to give you what you asked for in prayer? If Christ promised to give men what they asked for in prayer provided they prayed in Christ's name, why do you and I have so many unanswered prayers?

(d) Matthew 7:7-8 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

This is a promise that they would receive everything they asked for; find everything they sought after; and that every door they knocked on would be opened unto them. All they had to do was ask for it, seek after it and knock on God's door in prayer and he would give it unto them.

Have you received everything you have ever asked for in prayer? Have you found everything that you sought after in prayer? Has every door that you knocked on been opened to you in prayer? If you have not received everything you asked for then this promise does not work for you. Why?

(e) Matt.21:21-22: Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Here he gives them an invitation to ask for big things in prayer. He gives them an invitation to ask for major miracles in prayer. He said they could move mountains by prayer. He said they could speak to a mountain and cast it into the sea if they asked for it in prayer. These promises show there were no limits or restrictions on these prayer promises. They show that those who have these promises should not be hesitant to ask for major

miracles and impossibilities. All they had to do was believe and ask for them.

Have you ever asked God to do something by faith believing he would do it and he didn't do it? Have you ever moved a mountain in prayer? Have you ever tossed a mountain into the sea in prayer? Have you asked God for miracles in prayer? Did he answer all of them? If not why not?

These prayer promises in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John plainly say that God would give men anything or whatsoever they asked for in prayer. They plainly say they would receive everything they asked for, find every thing they sought after and that every door they knocked on in prayer would be opened. They plainly say that God would give them anything they willed or wanted in prayer. These prayer promises have no limits or restrictions. They invite men to ask for miracles in prayer. The only condition was for them to ask in Christ's name and believe.

These are the prayer promises that have plagued Christians for many years. Many a Christian has claimed these promises and were disappointed and disillusioned when they did not come to pass. Many Christians have had their hearts broken claiming these promises that did not work for them. Many a Christian has claimed these promises for God to heal their loved ones only to see them die in spite of the fact that it says, *whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing ye shall receive*. Many a Christian has turned his back on God and become bitter with God when these prayer promises did not come to pass for them.

It's easy to see why these Christians become that way. The promises are clear cut and straight forward. God promised to give them anything and everything they asked for in prayer. Not just some things but anything and all things. But we look around us and we see prayer after prayer unanswered. We see Christians pleading with God and begging God to heal someone who never gets healed. We see and hear preachers especially charismatic preachers quote these verses for miracles that never come to pass. There have been 1000's of Christians who have been disappointed by these prayer promises. We have even heard of Christians who have gone apostate when God did not do for them as he promised in these prayer promises.

Are these promises a lie? Does God make promises that he does not keep? No. Numbers 23:19 says: ***God is not a man, that he should lie;***

neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

If God keeps His promises why doesn't he give us what we ask for in prayer? He said ***whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*** How can God make such promises if he is not going to keep them?

The answer is that He is going to keep every one of these prayer promises in the time he said he would.

The answer to these problem prayer promises is found in the following verses. Read them carefully.

In John 16:16-23 Jesus said; ***A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.***

Then said some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me: and, Because I go to the Father?

They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye enquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

When he said in a *little while ye shall not see me* what was he talking about? His ascension back to his Father in heaven. When He said *ye shall see me again*, what was He talking about? His Second Coming. He said that when he ascended back to the Father they would have sorrow but when He came again they would have joy.

With that in mind look at the next verse;

Verse 23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

When he said *in that day* in verse 23 he was referring to what he said in verse 22. In verse 22 He said, ***I will see you again*** which is a prophecy of

his Second Coming. In the day he comes again whatsoever any man asks the Father in his name he will give it unto them. These prayer promises that have given Christians problems for so many years are future promises. They will come to pass, *in that day*, the day he comes again. As a matter of fact, when Christ comes again, prayer will be answered without delay in the Kingdom of God.

Isaiah 65:24 says: ***And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.***

This prayer promise will come to pass in the Kingdom of God. See Isaiah 65:17-23.

The prayer promises of the four gospels are based upon this prophecy. This is a prophecy of the coming Kingdom of God. Until the Kingdom comes you and I will have to struggle with unanswered prayer at times. Believe me, unanswered prayer is one of the hardest obstacles that we Christians have to face. Unanswered prayer causes us grief and sorrow. It disappoints us and makes us weep and cry at times. I begged God for six months to heal my Son Julius, but the answer was no. He died on June 16, 2001. I cannot tell you how much grief and sorrow that my wife and I have suffered over his death. There is not a day that I do not think of him. We miss him very much. I do not know why God did not answer our prayers. My heart goes out to you if your prayers have not been answered, especially if you have a loved one who is seriously ill. I know what you are going through. I pray that your prayers will be answered, but if they are not, please do not become bitter or angry with God. The day is coming when all prayer will be answered without delay but until then we will have to contend with unanswered prayer at times. But remember when prayer is not answered, Romans 8:28 still works.