***Prayer****

**1Thessalonians 5:17-18** (17) **Pray without ceasing**.
(18) In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.
*One of the key concepts regarding prayer centers on the reason for which the petitioner is making the request. If making the request is driven by selfish, impure motives, then he or she cannot expect God to grant the plea. God does reserve the right to say no! James made this point abundantly clear in his epistle, turn to;*
**James 4:2-3** (2) Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.
(3) **Ye ask, and receive not**, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.
*Selfish ambitions motivated by a sense of nonspiritual concern nullifies the effectiveness of prayer. Acts 8:9-25 provides an adequate illustration of this truth. In this passage, a man named Simon had been practicing sorcery in the city of Samaria. Many of the Samaritans had been convinced by his deceptive, "magic" tricks. When Philip visited the area, however, and preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ, a host of the Samaritans believed and obeyed the truth, including Simon the sorcerer. After a while, the apostles came to the area and laid their hands on some of the disciples for the purpose of imparting spiritual gifts to them. When Simon saw this power, he offered the apostles money, requesting to purchase the ability to give people spiritual gifts. He had not purged himself of old habits of selfish ambition. Peter rebuked Simon and explained that he needed to repent and beg God to forgive him for the wicked thoughts and intents of his heart. Simon's request for the power to impart the gifts of the Holy Spirit was denied, not only because it violated the will of God, but also because it apparently was issued out of purely selfish*

*motives.*
*Jesus further documented the fact that prayers which issue from selfish motivations will not be effective. In the Sermon on the Mount, He stated*: And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward (Matthew 6:5). *The hypocrites' showy prayers designed to garner public approval nullified the effectiveness of their requests. The Bible explains that prayer is not a magic incantation that can be spouted out to accomplish selfish ambitions. Instead, the effective prayer comes from a righteous person, who prays persistently, by the authority of Christ, according to God's will, out of unselfish motives, believing he or she will receive the petitions requested. The persistence of the petition is another factor that the Bible indicates has a bearing on the effectiveness of prayer. The gospel writer Luke stated a parable of Jesus in this context about a widow who made a request to an unjust judge. Her request was noble and right, but the unjust judge did not feel obligated to comply with her appeal. Due to her persistence, however, and her "continual coming" to the judge, he finally granted her petition. Jesus then commented that if an unjust judge can be swayed by persistence, how much more effective is the persistent prayer of a virtuous person when addressing the righteous Judge of all the Earth, turn to;*
**Luke 18:1-8** (1) And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;
(2) Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:
(3) And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.
(4) And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;
(5) Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest

by her continual coming she weary me.
(6) And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.
(7) And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?
(8) I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?
*There is another concern that I find very perplexing in verse 8.* When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? *This question should shake people to the core, but will it?. Turn to;*
**Luke 17:26-27** (26) And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.
(27) They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.
*In all recorded history there is no other event other than the fall of mankind which has had such a profound effect upon the condition of this Earth and which has so profoundly affected human history. Was there faith on the earth, other than Noah and his family before they entered into the Ark? Listen to this;* The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all that they chose (Genesis 6:2). *Out of these intermarriages came a generation of men and women in almost total rebellion against God. Jesus says;* as it was in the days of Noah so shall it be at His coming. *Within the safety of the Ark on that day of reckoning were the faithful only, which the inspired pen says were eight people. Go with me as scripture reveals the startling conclusion in;*
**Genesis 6:5-8** (5) And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.
(6) And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.
(7) And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created

from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.
(8) But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.
*How will the vast majority stand in the next general impending ruin? Remember Noah's day? As it was then, Christ has said it would be when He returns. Of that vast population there was only eight persons who believed the message of Noah and obeyed God's word. Evidently in the world to day the majority have chosen the broad road which leads unto death because the way of life is too confined for them. Dishonesty, avarice, pride and iniquity have separated them from the prayerful and faithful. Now, the overwhelming majority are opposed to the saving truth and are fascinated with lies, fables, atheism, infidels, skeptics, and the lure of false religion. One marked feature of Noah's day was the intense worldliness of the inhabitants. They were eating and drinking, planting and building, marrying and giving in marriage, not that these things were of themselves sinful, but they were carried to a high degree of intemperance. This constant indulgence of their own desires corrupted them and defiled the earth under them. The same evils intensified exist in our world to day. Men are blind to reason and the result of indulging in perverted desires turns them away. Before the flood, God had given them opportunity, but they would have no part of it. The boat was afloat without them! Where were the prayers for logic and reason? Where were the ear that they might hear what the spirit sayeth? Turn to;*
**1Peter 3:18-20** (18) For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:
(19) By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;
(20) Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark

was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.
*The eight souls saved by water is a metaphor of the saving grace by faith in Christ. Who are the spirits in prison? Those in the prison of sin. Under the law, the High Priest once a year would go into the Holiest of all to offer for himself and the people, turn with me to;*
**Hebrews 9:1-7** (1) Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.
(2) For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.
(3) And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;
(4) Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;
(5) And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.
(6) Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.
(7) But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:
*If the right conditions are met, pardon may be granted. Now under the old Mosaic law, pardon was never granted because the right conditions were never met and the High Priest would have to offer for the people again the following year. This all changed with the death of Jesus. He is the one and only perfect sacrifice acceptable to God. In Him alone is pardon as explained in;*
**Hebrews 9:24-28** (24) For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but

into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:
(25) Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;
(26) For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.
(27) And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:
(28) So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.
*Now when Jesus was quickened by the spirit He went and preached unto the spirits in prison. For what purpose? Peter used the example of Noah and his family being saved by water as a metaphor of salvation in these last days, listen to this;*
The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: (1Peter 3:21). *The contemporaries of Noah failed to heed God's warning, they were not thoughtful in prayer, they missed their opportunity. As the ark was rising up on the waters, it was then too late. No doubt they had laughed to scorn that which they termed, fear and superstition, and of the preacher of righteousness. So will the solemn messengers of warning be ridiculed in our day? The result will be the same as then, God will spare the righteous only, turn to;*
**2Peter 2:4-5** (4) For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;
(5) And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, **a preacher of righteousness**, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;
*There is a doctrine called the "sinners prayer", or as some say,*

*"pray through" believing salvation can be obtained in this way. Where, exactly, in the Scriptures does it teach that doctrine? Salvation is conditional on "obedience of faith." I would not object to the sinner praying because it shows a change in attitude, a willingness to obey God. But it is our duty to inform the sinner of the plan of salvation established by the Son of God while He was still on earth and preached by His Apostles after He ascended up into Heaven.* Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine (2Timothy 4:2). *In the waters of the great flood, only Noah and his family came unto God. It is evident those who drowned did not pray unto God in a time when they might have been found. The point is made that in the day of reckoning it will be to late. The notion of people being given a second opportunity to obey the Gospel in the afterlife is an extremely dangerous doctrine that is counterproductive to the cause of Christ. It potentially could make people think they can postpone their obedience to the Gospel in this life. But the Gospel is very clear;* And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (Hebrews (9:27). *Jesus intensified this view in the parable of the rich man, (Luke 16:26). From the belly of the fiery beast he could do nothing to change the environment in which he found himself. His condition will not and cannot be altered. There is a great divide that prevents escape. The last request of the rich man is recorded in;*

**Luke 16:27-31** (27) Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:
(28) For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.
(29) Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.
(30) And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.
(31) And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the

prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.
*How true the words of the Saviour who rose from the dead. Paul the Apostle was very concerned about his brethren, so much so that He offered prayer on their behalf, turn to;*
**Romans 10:1-4** (1) Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.
(2) For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.
(3) For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.
(4) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.
*Paul did not pray that Israel be saved in their present condition, but explained that Christ is the end of the law and that they should confess and believe in Him. This is what Paul was praying for, that Israel would accept Christ as their promised Messiah. Therefore should not Paul's concept of prayer be practiced today? Pray that the lost should be able to come unto the knowledge of the truth. Most men in a Christian land believe that what the Bible says is true, but they do not believe the things which the Bible says. The Bible says,* repent and be baptized for the remission of sin, *how few believe it!! Thus our task is to reverse unbelief as recorded in;*
**Colossians 4:2-4** (2) Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;
(3) Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:
(4) That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.
*There is confusion in the world today just as there was confusion in the time of Paul. Confusion is the devil's tool. Resolving confusion is an arduous task and requires persistent*

*prayer. Since the advent of Calvinism a new doctrine came about from the eighteenth century onwards. This false doctrine says that salvation does not require baptism, but that salvation precedes baptism. One scripture often quoted is*
Romans 10:13 - For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. *And by this one verse the argument is made, that baptism is not required for salvation! However this is a false since of security. Listen, when Paul called on the "name of the Lord", he washed away his sins, turn with me to;*
**Act 22:12-16** (12) And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there,
(13) Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.
(14) And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.
(15) For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard.
(16) And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.
*If I am become your enemy because I tell you the truth, at least you know the truth. We know that on the day of Pentecost the church was established because the saved were added to it. Afterwards we learn this is still happening, the saved are translated into the Kingdom by the Father, a most wonderful event recorded in;*
**Colossians 1:12-14** (12) Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:
(13) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath **translated us into the kingdom** of his dear Son:
(14) In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

*If there were no Kingdom on earth, how could one be translated into it? But the saved have been added into it. The Church is real, however it has been hated, reviled, tormented, accused falsely, despised, rejected, and there is a general feeling of enmity toward it. Jesus said,* and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake (Matthew 24:9). *While on earth Jesus established within His gospel, the ordinance of baptism. Jesus said;* He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16). *What does belief do? Romans 10:17 says;* So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. *Many say they believe, but has it produced faith? Faith is the effect of believing the word of God. But faith in what for salvations effect?*
*Repentance is the effect of faith in salvations plan; Acts 2:38.*
*Confession is the effect of faith in salvations plan; Ro 10:17.*
*Baptism is the effect of faith in salvations plan; 1Peter 3:21.*
*After this one is to walk in newness of life in Christ until death.*
*If belief has not produced obedient faith in salvations plan, belief only, is like trying to nail jello to a wall. But to the obedient faithful the power of God unto salvation is real and was nailed to a cross. So then, if you believe--by faith come repenting, confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and be baptized by the authority of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for forgiveness of sin and translation into the Kingdom of the Son. This is the gospel. It's invitation is open, also prayer requests, in either case come while we persuade with song.*

*This message approved by*
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*a minister for Christ*

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***Ref***. *Apologetics Press :: Reason & Revelation May 2010*
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***Ref***. *Noah's Time and Ours: Preparing for Eternity.Com*
***Ref***. *A Christian Apologia web site*

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