

7th Day Pentecostal Assemblies (Esreso, Ksi)

2021 End-of-Year Camp Meeting

‘Breakthrough Prayer’ Meeting

Date: Friday, 31st December, 2021

Time: 9am to 11am

Venue: Kumasi High School, Gyinyase, Kumasi

Message:

The Power of Passionate Unceasing Prayers

By

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How Much Prayer is Real?

The Biblical call to prayers is not a call to religious formality. It is a call to serious business; it a time of grace and power before the King of the Universe – not a time to go through the motions of a religious ceremony!

The prayer that moves heaven is the heartfelt persistent prayer of the righteous. This is the only real prayer there is – it’s proven by the results it produces. This is the prayer we are called upon to pray as God’s righteous people, the Elijah-type of fiery fervent prayers that accomplish much. We read in James 5:16-18:

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplished much.

“Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.

“Then he prayed again, and the sky poured rain and the earth produced its fruit” (NASB).

Elijah’s prayer for the heavens to shut (3^{1/2}-year drought) and for the heaven to open (rainfall) offers us a credible template of “the prayer of the righteous.” *The first element that qualifies one to pray this prayer of effectiveness is the quality of righteousness.* It’s the prayer of the righteous, not just by anybody. Hence the exhortation to “confess your sins to one another, and [then] pray for one another so that you may be healed. For the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much”. The text then goes on to cite *Eliyahu* as an example “a righteous man” whose prayer accomplished much -- causing drought and rainfall, controlling the weather of an entire land!

Sadly, people go into prayer without confessing their sins and so the prayer yields no results. This is because the prayer is not being offered by a righteous person whose sins have been forgiven him upon confessing them and thus put right with God (1 John 1:9; Prov 28:13; Matt 5:23-24).

Elohim is a God who hears prayers even the prayer of the sinner, but the sinner must confess his sin for forgiveness (Ps 65:2-3). Short of this, be sure that God will not routinely listen to the prayer of the habitual, incorrigible sinner who refuses to confess or forsake his sin. That much “the man born blind” knew and so rebutted the Pharisees who sought to disparage Yeshua, who had healed him, by saying He was a sinner. His response was incisive and pointed:

“We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone does His will, he hears him.

“Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind.

“If this man were not from God, He could do nothing” (John 9:31-33 NASB).

The man knew his scriptures, which he knew the Pharisees also knew, that “He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination” (Prov. 28:9). Moreover, the Psalmist writes, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me” (Ps 66:18). So here we have two instances of ‘not hearing’ where the former gives rise to the latter! If you

deliberately refuse to hear (Heb. “*shema*”) the Law of God, God, in response, will also deliberately refuse to hear your prayer. In fact, that prayer of yours will be abominable to Him, a nuisance in His ears.

The power of the righteous in prayer lies in his confidence before God which arises from the righteous life he lives by grace (see Heb 3:14; 1 John 2:28-29, 3:21 4, 17; Heb 4:16). Such was Elijah. He not only maintained his righteous stand in the face of the powerful corrupting cult of Baal, sponsored by the powerful royal consort of the time, Jezebel, but also displayed zeal for Yahweh, becoming the face of true worship in Israel, while 7000 saints hid from public view (1 Kings 19:14-18; Rom. 11:2-4). This was the righteous man who, in his zeal for Yah, slew 450 prophets of Baal after he defeated them when they failed to call down fire in a ‘contest of the gods’ held at Mount Carmel between himself and the prophets of Baal. The contest had a simple rule: Each side, representing their respective deities, was to prepare a sacrifice with no fire put under it and call upon his God, and the God who answers by fire, ‘He is [or will be] God’ (1 Kings 18:21-24).

The prophets of Baal prepared theirs first and called upon their god from morning till 3pm (the time of the evening sacrifice), but Baal, said to be the god of rainstorm, failed to answer by fire.

Elijah then took 12 stones, representing the 12 tribes of Israel, and built an altar, dug a trench around it, prepared the sacrifice and caused both the sacrifice (including the wood) and the trench to be doused in water. He then called upon the God of Israel. In no time at all, “the fire of YHWH fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces to the ground and said, “YHWH [The LORD] He is God; YHWH He is God” (1 Kings 18:38-39).

It was a glorious day for YHWH and His servant Elijah, and a day of shame and slaughter for the prophets of Baal!

Elijah was a man who in his burning zeal for God would neither countenance nor tolerate evil. He practised and defended righteousness. His holy zeal is worthy of emulation, or we stand in danger of God’s judgment, not because we are evil-doers ourselves but because we allowed evil to triumph, as we have been warned in Romans 1:32:

“Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (see also Ps 50:18, Prov 24:24-25, 28:4).

Saints Pray Fervent Prayers

Now, how Elijah did pray? Apart from his zeal for righteousness, *Elijah was also passionate in prayers*. (Perhaps we should conflate the two; see the two as one, since zeal for righteousness must involve a passion for prayer, as prayer is a work of righteousness).

Elder *Ya'akov* (James) asserts that Elijah did not allow human weakness and doubts to hamper his prayer life but prayed seriously and sincerely (“earnestly”) in both episodes of prayer -- for the drought and for rain to break the 3 1/2-year drought! With the latter, scripture recounts that he prayed seven times consecutively until the sign of rainfall appeared! (1 Kings 18:41-46).

Eliyahu was indefatigable (untiring) in prayer. His style of prayer follows a prayer pattern long practised by the saints before him -- all the way back to the patriarchs! It's the only Biblical prayer attested to in the scriptures – the-never-give-up until there's a breakthrough-type of prayer!

Such was the prayer Isaac offered on behalf of his wife, Rebecca, in Genesis 25:21. The translated text of the English Bible reads:

“Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife because she was barren; and the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived” (NASB).

It sounds so ordinary, almost like a dry impersonal prayer request. It is the original Hebrew text that brings out *the passion and earnestness invested in the prayer by both Isaac and God!* The KJV comes closer to giving us this sense of the Hebrew. It reads:

“And Isaac entreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived.”

The word “entreated” has been stated twice, used of both Isaac and Yahweh, though the latter is in a passive state (“was entreated of him”). It is translated from the Hebrew word ‘*athar*’ (Strong’s #6279) and means to “pray, supplicate, to burn incense in worship, i.e., intercede (reciprocally, listen to prayer), entreat, plead.” Thus, in Hebrew the text literally reads:

“And Yitzchaq pleaded with YHWH [Adonai] on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and was pleaded for him by YHWH, and his wife Rivkah became pregnant.”

That is to say, Yah pleaded back with an affirmative answer (lit., ‘and pleaded for him YHWH’, ‘*vaye’ater lo YHWH*’) when Isaac pleaded with Yah (lit’, ‘and pleaded Isaac to YHWH’, ‘*vaye’eter Yitzchaq la-YHWH*’).

The clear sense, of course is that Yahweh responded to Isaac’s plea. But then, the Hebrew uses an expression – the same word used to describe Isaac’s mode of prayer – which denotes that God not only heard Isaac’s prayer but *also empathized with him in his (or wife’s) situation*.

Isaac’s prayer was no run-of-the mill prayer request that people just say and relax. The usual Hebrew word for prayer is “*tephilla*” the verbal form of which is “*palal*”, ‘to pray’, which equally embodies the Biblical idea of a fervent prayer. Yet to emphasize the fervour and commitment with which Isaac prayed on behalf of his wife, the Hebrew text doesn’t simply say “*va yitpale,*” and ‘he prayed,’ but that ‘he pleaded, or entreated or interceded or even supplicated’ (“*va-ye’eter*”). The Hebrew word “*ather*” carries the sense of a passionate plea and commitment to continue until the desired result is obtained. It is persistence and passion in prayer; it is waiting on the LORD in prayer and not leaving His presence until the blessing is received or the request is granted; it is faith-driven supplication that refuses to take ‘no’ for an answer; it is appealing to the mercy, justice and faithfulness of God in prayer until same is fulfilled in your life.

This is the kind of prayer Christ plainly exhorts us to pray in the Gospels. He proposes no different type of prayer but the very persistent fervent prayer style of the ancient saints. Luke reports:

“And He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint [i.e., lose heart],

“Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man.

“And there was a widow in that city, and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary [that is give me legal protection from my opponent]

“And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, though I fear not God, nor regard man;

“Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

“And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

“And shall not God avenge [bring justice to] His own elect, which cry day and night to Him, though He bear long with them?

“I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the son of man cometh shall He find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:1-8).

Persistent prayer driven by faith gets through to God. It is not a brief one-time prayer that one mutters to God and concludes with the sign of the cross! It is prayer offered “day and night” in response to which God brings justice to His people speedily. This is not to be confused with the lengthy prayers of “vain repetitions” made by hypocrites in the manner of the mantra-like incantations of pagans (Mat. 6:5-8). No, this is seeking the face of the Lord in prayer until He answers – prayers whose words are not “vain repetitions” but rooted in the scriptural promises of God. And there’s no self-serving motivation here; it is not for show to receive the praises of men.

However, the problem is, will people have the “faith”, to pray this kind of unrelenting prayer, especially as the Lord’s return draws closer? This faith under discussion is not just faith to believe in God but *faith connected with prayer* -- faith to pray over a prolonged period; faith to keep believing the Lord, although He apparently delays.

This is what is missing among many so-called believers today. Hence false prophets are cashing in, advertising the ‘shorter route’ of ritualistic spiritual solutions (*‘akwankyere’*) bordering on idolatry!

But Christ affirms that persistence and commitment in prayers pays off. He tells a similar story in Luke 11:5-13:

“Then He said to them, Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

“For a friend of mine has come to me from a journey and I have nothing to set before him.

“and from inside he answers and says, ‘Do not bother me, the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything’.

“I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

“For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

“Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?

“Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he?

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? (NASB).

The moral is that persistence, in this case persistence in prayer, yields results, and not just any results but good, beneficial results from “the Father of lights” who gives “good and perfect” gifts to His children (Jam 1:17). The best gift He offers, in addition to His Son (John 3:16; 2 Cor 9:15), is, of course, His Holy Spirit which is also the Spirit of His Son (Rom 8:9, Gal 4:6; 2 Cor. 3:17). We Only have to ask persistently to have the predetermined result of answered prayer! Namely “everyone who asks, receives, and he who seeks, finds, and to him who knocks, it will be opened”. The exception is where “you ask with the wrong motives so that you may spend it on your pleasures” (Jam.4:1-3 NASB).

The Greek word translated “persistence” (or “importunity” in the KJV) is “*anaideian*” (Strong’s #335) and means “shamelessness, shameless persistence.” That is to say, *one is not ashamed to keep asking until the request is granted.*

Such was the earnest, steadfast prayer Isaac prayed – without shame – until God answered him. In fact, the Hebrew text suggests that God Himself got involved in the act of prayer. As earlier pointed out, the connection is the use of the same Hebrew word (*‘ather’*) for both Isaac’s prayer and God’s answer. YHWH was obviously touched by Isaac’s stirring, unyielding, passionate prayers on behalf of his wife. A prayer so intense, so heartfelt and sublime would tug at the heartstrings of God. So, He pleaded back to Isaac’s plea in the form of answered prayer!

This shows clearly that when we pray “according to His will” (not in rebellion or with wrong motives, but sincerely and passionately, see 1 John 5:14-15), He ends up empathizing with us in our situation; He immerses Himself in our prayers because He then feels our pain vicariously. God is not indifferent to our needs. But “just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust” (Ps 103:13-14 NASB; cp. 1 Cor. 10:13). Our Heavenly Father deeply cares for us.

A Two-way Traffic: from Earth to Heaven and from Heaven to Earth

Prayer is a two-way traffic – it goes up and it comes down. Prayer is about having a conversation with God, even if it is to confess a sin, ask for forgiveness or make a request. Prayer is about sharing our deepest concerns with God; it is about opening up to heaven; it’s about laying your soul bare to God, unburdening yourself to Him as would a worried child to his father or mother. And that’s exactly the point: *we have a family relationship with God*. He is our Father and we are His children. As such, we share our concerns with Him in prayer to offload them to Him “for he cares for us” (1 Pet. 5:7). The ‘care’ is seen in the answered prayer. Our prayers are welcome in heaven exactly because He cares for us, so much so that, our prayers are accepted as an offering of sweet savour before the throne of God in heaven. It was with this understanding that David prayed:

“Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as incense; and the lifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice” (Ps 141:2 KJV).

A beautiful blend of prayer and incense offering is reported in Luke 1:10-11 at the time of the visitation of the angel Gabriel to announce the miraculous birth of John the Baptist:

“And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

“And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense”.

From this point on, the prayer becomes God’s, something heavenly, an offering of incense before Him in His very Presence in heaven:

“And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

“And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

“And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints ascended up before God out of the angel’s hand.

“And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightings, and an earthquake.

“And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound” (Rev. 8:2-6; see also Rev 5:8).

Heaven responds to the prayers of the saints ascending before God as sweet-smelling incense by fire! As the angel fills with fire the censer with which he offered the prayers of the saints before God, judgment breaks out on earth in accordance with the prophetic will of Yahweh: “and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightings, and an earthquake”.

The throne room of God is filled with the incense-borne prayers of the saints, and God comes to co-own the prayers with us. The Spirit of God practically takes over the prayer and actually ‘prays’ the prayer with us and on our behalf. We read in Romans chapter 8:26-27:

“In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

“and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to the will of God” (NASB; cp. Jer. 29:11; Isa. 65:24).

Do you get it?

The Spirit of God intercedes for us over the same issues we are praying about but in a sophisticated polished heavenly language unintelligible to the physical senses.

Moreover, the Spirit by His intercession aligns our petition with the will of God for our line, facilitating the granting of the prayer request.

Here, the Spirit of God is actively empathizing with the supplicant, as, indeed, same was displayed towards Israel in their affliction in the wilderness on their way from Egypt.

“In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them, In His love and in His mercy, He redeemed them, and He lifted them and carried them all the days of old” (Isa. 63:9 NASB; see Ex. 3:7-8).

Interestingly, God promises to make Gentiles who come to faith in the God of Israel in the last days – evidenced by their lives of righteousness and observance of the Sabbath – joyful (not in ‘My house of prayer’ as in English Bibles but) in “THE HOUSE OF MY PRAYER” (Hebrew “*beyt tephillati*”), for My house shall be called the house of prayer for all nations.” In short, God says He will pray their prayers; He will own their prayers and pray back an answer – an answer of joy! (Isa.56:7).

Identifying with our humanity is part of the reason why Jesus came to experience firsthand our suffering, our plight, so that He might show empathy by extending heavenly help to us:

“For verily He took not on *Him the nature of* angels; but He took on *Him* the seed of Abraham.

“Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

“For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted” (Heb 2:16-18).

All these elements – divine empathy and intercession -- were part of Isaac’s prayer as the Hebrew word *ather* not only means ‘to entreat’ or ‘intercede’ but also ‘to burn incense’ which, in

this case, is burnt in heaven mingled with the prayers and praises of our lips (see Heb 13:15; Ps 22:3).

Daily Sacrifice, Daily Prayer; Ever-burning Holy Spirit Fire!

In a way, our prayers and praises should be seen as replacing the daily sacrifice instituted under the Levitical priesthood (Num. 28:4, 6-8; Ex 30:6-10) Indeed, such understanding of *a functional equivalence between offering and prayers* goes way back to the ancient practitioners of the Biblical faith. Once again, we see evidence of this understanding during Elijah's contest with the prophets of Baal: he timed his prayer for fire to coincide with the time of the evening sacrifice.

In Luke 1, in the Jerusalem Temple, prayer and incense offering took place simultaneously, a representation of the practices in heaven before the throne of Glory!

Viewed together, the *daily sacrifice* (morning and evening), *daily incense offering* (morning and evening), and *continual lamp burning* before YHWH (from evening to morning, Lev 24:1-4; Ex 27:20-21) provide theological linkage and background to the N.T commands to "pray without ceasing" and "Do not put out the Spirit's fire" (1 Thess. 5:17, 19).

Over time, it became the practice to organize Jewish prayers at the designated times of the daily sacrifice, consisting of a morning offering and an evening offering.

- The first prayer called '*Shacharit*', the morning prayer, the prayer of the rising sun, correlates to the time of the morning offering held between the 1st and 3rd hours (6am - 9am).
- The second prayer called '*Mincha*' is held between the 6th and 9th hours (12 noon/ high noon to 3pm). The 9th hour was the time of the evening sacrifice which marked the time 'between the [two] evenings' (Hebrew "*beyn ha-arvaim*") i.e., 3pm – 6pm. We see the Apostles Peter and John going up to the temple at this time, "the hour of prayer," whereupon they healed the lame man who sat at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple in the name of the Lord Yeshua (Acts 3:1-10).
- The third prayer, called '*Ma'ariv*'; is the evening prayer; it has no set time (roughly 6pm) and had no accompanying temple offering.
- But there is a fourth prayer which is really an extra time of prayer for people who missed the regular times of prayer. It is called '*Musaf*' and it can be said all day.

Prayer is a sweet-scented offering we need to offer regularly to God both for fellowship and for the receipt of wonderful blessings from God. Hence the invitation:

“Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb.4:16).

Prayer is a time of power and favour with God.

Divine Assurances and Glorious Manifestations and Victories Obtained and Sealed by Prayer

Aware of the great influence prayer wields with God (see 2 Chron 7:14; 16 Ps 68:1-2), none of the great heroes of the faith toyed with prayer. They believed in the inherent perfect goodness and faithfulness of God to the extent that they even engaged in healthy reverential exchanges with God in prayer until they had their requests granted by Him.

Take Abraham. He was so unrelenting in his plea for clemency for Sodom and Gomorrah when YHWH, in the company of two angels, came down to punish that wicked society and He called at his home. Interceding for the inhabitants of Sodom where his nephew Lot lived, Abraham successfully bargained with God to spare the city if there were found ten righteous people in it -- and that from an initial bargain of fifty righteous people. His appeal to God’s sense of justice was particularly admirable: “shall not the judge of all the earth deal justly?”, he clinched his case (Gen. 18:20-33).

That was one show of ‘*holy chutzpah*’ (confidence) before Yah, the Judge of all the earth!

But wait until you get to his grandson Jacob. He not only bargained with God but wrestled with Him (in the form of ‘a man’) until he got his blessing of protection for himself and his household (Gen. 32). Until he received this blessing, he wouldn’t let God go, neither by physical nor emotional disengagement. “Yes, he wrestled with the angel and prevailed, He wept and sought His favor. He found him at Bethel and there He spoke with us, even YHWH [the LORD], the God of hosts, YHWH is His name” (Hos 12:4-5).

The “angel” turned out to be the Angel of YHWH who is divine and bears the exact image of the Father. When Jacob asked what His Name is, He queried, “Why is it that you ask my name? And He blessed him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, I have seen God face to face,

yet my life has been preserved” (Gen 32:29-30). Moments before, Angel YHWH had renamed Jacob ‘Yisra’el’ (‘Israel’), for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed” (v 28).

The mystery divine Being Jacob called “Peniel” (‘the face of God’) and named the place after is none other than our Savior Jesus Christ (*Yeshua ha-Mashiach*) who is “the image of the invisible God”, in whose “face we have the knowledge of the glory of God” (2 Cor 4:4, 6; Col. 1:15; see also John 1:18, 5:37).

Moses, Jacob’s descendant by several hundred years, was no different in his prayer posture. When God wanted to wipe out the nation of Israel and raise a new nation from him (because of the rebellion of the Golden Calf), Moses would not let Him. He sparred with God in prayer for quite a while, invoking His covenantal promises to Abraham Isaac and Jacob.

Furthermore, he argued that should God carry out His threat to wipe out Israel it would be a geopolitical scandal that would reflect badly on His reputation among the nations. God listened to Moses’ plea for Israel and spared the nation (see Ex 32:7-14; also Num. 13:11-21).

For Moses, this was *a moment of grace* he would not let go ‘waste’; he would seize the moment to ask for more favor. ‘If He has been gracious to forgive Israel this egregious sin, what additional favor won’t He grant me if I request it of Him?’ Moses reasoned in faith and then proceeded to make his request:

“And Moses said unto the LORD, See, Thou Sayest Unto me, Bring up this people: and hast not let me know whom Thou will send with me. Yet Thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in My sight.

“Now therefore, I pray Thee, if I have found grace in Thy sight, shew me now Thy way, that I may know Thee, that I may find grace in Thy sight: and consider that this nation is Thy people.

“And He said unto him, My presence shall go forth with thee, and I will give thee rest.

“And he said unto Him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

“For wherein shall it be known here that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not in that Thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and Thy people from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken for thou hast found grace in My sight, and I know thee by name.

“And he said, I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory [Heb. “*kavod*”].

“And He said I will make all My goodness pass before thee and I will proclaim the name of the LORD [YHWH] before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

“And He said thou canst not see My face: for there shall no man see Me, and live.

“And the LORD said, Behold there is a place by Me and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

“And it shall come to pass while My glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and I will cover thee with My hand while I pass by:

“And I will take away Mine hand, and thou shalt see My back parts: but My face shall not be seen” (Ex 33:12-23).

The stage is set for one of the grandest manifestations of the Divine in all scripture:

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.

“And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to Me in the top of the mount.

And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

“And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

“And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

“And the LORD [YHWH] passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

“Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children; and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

“And Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped” (Ex 34:1-8 KJV).

Awesome! In a profound enthralling manifestation of glory, YHWH (translated “The LORD”) proclaims His own Name (Heb. “*shem*”).

Now, what does it mean for YHWH to proclaim His Name to Moses who already knew His covenant Name (YHWH), at least as far back as Ex 6:2-3?

In light of Acts 7:38 which says it was an Angel which spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai (and not YHWH), is it to be understood that this Angel (but YHWH in Exodus chapters 19, 20 and 34) is the Angel YHWH? (See Acts 7:30-34, 53; Ex. 3:1-7; Zech. 3: 1-7; Gen 18:1-5, 19:24; John 8:56-58; Isa 63:9).

Reading between the lines, we see this very idea present in the text. YHWH proclaims His own Name, and yet the text sounds as if He were proclaiming the Name of a third person. It reads: ‘YHWH descends in the cloud and proclaims the Name of Yahweh’; it doesn’t say He proclaims His own name. But make no mistake – it’s still YHWH. But as far as ‘proclamation’ is concerned; as far as utterance, Word (Hebrew “*Davar*”; Greek “*Logos*”, Aramaic “*Memra*”) is concerned, this is the Divine heavenly Being called “THE WORD,” who was with God in the beginning and “by whom were all things created” (Col. 1:16; Rev. 19:13). He was “the voice of the LORD God” (‘*qol Yahweh Elohim*’) in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:8); He’s the One who gives voice, utterance and substance to the things of God (John 1:1-3; Ps 33:6, 9; Heb. 11:3).

It is He who has always represented the Father, since no one has ever heard the voice of the Father Himself or seen His form (John 5:37, 1:18). This is the same Divine Personage who

revealed Himself to the elders of Israel as “the God of Israel” on Mount Sinai, and yet He did not harm them, even though they ate and drank in His presence. In that encounter, “there was under His feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.” (Ex. 24:9-11). The “pavement of sapphire” (NASB) on which the feet of the God of Israel rested is actually an integral part of God’s throne as seen from other scriptures (Ez. 1:26, 10:1; Rev 4:6, 15:2). This is Emmanuel on His divine throne!

The difference between the epiphany (divine manifestation) of Exodus 24 and the epiphany of Exodus 34 is that, with the former, YHWH is veiled in human form (through not without the trappings of the divine throne); with the latter, YHWH is robed in full glory but encased in the cloud – until He puts Moshe in the cleft of the rock and allows him to see His back!

In second Temple Jewish teaching (the intertestamental period up to 70 AD and well into the 2nd century AD), this Divine Heavenly Being who represents the Father as His Word and instrument (of creation and redemption), as well as the intermediary between God in heaven and humans on earth, was called the “*Lesser YHWH*.” It derives from the notion of “Two Powers in Heaven” (called ‘binitarianism,’ a belief in two divine heavenly Beings, e.g., Gen. 19:24; John 1:1-2; 1Cor 1:3; 1John 1:1-3, 2:22-24; 2 John 1:9-11; Rev. 3:21, 22:1). The “Two Powers” teaching is primarily based on Daniel 7:9-10 and 13-14 where One like a Son of man (human-like heavenly Being) comes with the clouds of heaven. “And He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed” (NASB).

In the text, “the Son of Man” is clearly distinct from the Ancient of Days. Still, He receives the worship of people – for which reason He was given “dominion, glory and an everlasting kingdom”. The Son of Man, aka the ‘Lesser YHWH’, shares glory authority and worship with the Ancient of Days. In His days on earth, particularly at His trial, Jesus applied this biblical image of the Messiah – “the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of Power and coming with the clouds of heaven” – to Himself (Matt 26: 64; Mark 14:62). And the point is same: The Son of Man, the Messiah Yeshua, shares authority and divine status with the heavenly Father, “the POWER,” “the Ancient of Days,” on whose right hand He sits!

This is the exact situation we find in Exodus 34. No one has seen the Father or heard His voice before, but it is the WORD who reveals, Him who proclaims His Name for all time (including in the Old Testament times). This Name is not a mere nomenclature or simply some sacred sound (as some restrict the name of the Creator to), but *Who the true Living God is*, what He represents; His Name is His character and attributes; His reputation – what He is known for. This is what YHWH proclaims in the hearing of Moses, not necessarily a special or particular sound.

In Hebrew thinking, a name (“*shem*”, pl. “*shemot*” in Hebrew) is often more than an identifier but serves to describe character. But more than being descriptive of the character of an individual, ‘name’ (*shem*) also stands for memory, reputation (that which remains), glory and renown.

Thus, the Name YHWH proclaims in the hearing of Moses is not just His personal designation or title but who HE is; it’s about His character and way of doing things. God’s Name /shem/character is this:

“God compassionate (*El Rachum*) and gracious (*ve-chanun*) and abundant in goodness (*ve-rav-chesed*) and truth (*ve-emet*).

“Keeping mercy [lovingkindness] for thousands (*notzer chesed la-alaphim*),

“Forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin (*nosay avon va-pasha ve-chata’ ah*) and that will by no means clear the guilty (*ve-naqeh lo yenaqeh*, i.e., “by no means leave the guilty unpunished” NASB),

“Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children unto the third and to the fourth generation (*poqed avon avot al-banim ve- al-benei vanim al- shilayshim ve-al – riba’eem*). (Underlined words not in the original Hebrew but implied).

This is the Name of YHWH proclaimed by the Divine Himself on Mount Sinai. Another divine Name is “Jealous” proclaimed during the same encounter with Moshe on the mount (Ex 34:14). The true Creator God should not be worshipped alongside any other god (‘el’). Hence YHWH’s name is *Jealous*, a truth reaffirmed by Yeshua in the Gospels and the Apostolic (N.T) Writings:

“You cannot serve God and mammon.” (“Mammon” is an Aramaic word for ‘wealth, riches, money, and avarice conceived as deity’) (Matt 6:24; Jam 4:4-5; 1 John 5:21).

Still another Name of Yah reflecting His person and character is “*Ehyeh asher Ehyeh*”: “I am who I am or I will be who I will be,” the unchanging God. This was the Name He gave Moses when he asked Him what name he should mention to the Israelites as the NAME of the Elohim (God) of their fathers (Ex 3:13-15; cp. Mal. 3:16; Heb. 13:8; Isa 9: 6-7, 7:14).

The Name YHWH itself, while more or less Elohim’s proper name, is still descriptive of who He is. It originates from the Hebrew verb “*hayah*” (‘to be’) and therefore means ‘the Self-existent One’; One who has life in Himself and the source of it. He is the Living God, the Being One, the Origin and Sustainer of life. Christ couldn’t have put it better when He said, “For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself” (John 5: 26; cp. 10:17-18; see also 1 John 5:11-12; John 14:6).

Do you now clearly see why Yeshua is also YHWH?

Both He and the Father have life in themselves, and its through Him that we have life from the GODHEAD, composed of the Father and the Son (1John 1:3; Rev. 22:1; Col 2:9; 1:19).

As the agent of God, the Father, Christ mediates between heaven (the realm of God) and earth (the realm of man). (See 1 Tim 2:5; Heb. 7:25). It is through Him that our prayers ascend to God, and we receive answers from God. Hence “if you [on earth] ask the Father [who is in heaven] for anything in My name [invoking My name or on My behalf], He will give it to you” (John 16:23). Then also “Whatever you ask in My name [invoking My authority] that I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it’ (John 14:13-14).

The answered prayer is actually an expression of the will of both the Father and the Son for our lives.

Why?

It because Messiah and His Father are one (essence, John 10:30) (Heb. “*echad*”, Gen. 2:24; Deut. 6:4), so that there is nothing the Father will do that the Son will not do, and there is nothing that

the Son do that the Father will not do. The Two are One (*echad*) in character, will and purpose. Perfect unity!

Therefore, the Son says in response to disciple Philip's request to see the Father visibly: "... he that hath seen Me has seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake" (John 14:9-11).

The Son bears the "express image" or exact representation or replica of the Father's nature and glows with the radiance of His glory (Heb. 1:3; 1Tim 6:16). This is the YHWH who proclaims the name of Yah, which is *a set of Divine attributes that should come to define our understanding of the character of Elohim and how we ought to relate to Him.*

In the first place, He is "God compassionate." in the Hebrew "*El rachum.*" This is of particular relevance to our subject: Prayer. The Hebrew adjective '*rachum*' derives from the Hebrew word for 'womb or bowels' "*rechem*" (Strong's #7358), conceived in Hebrew thought (similar to Akan cultural world view) as "the seat of compassion." Therefore, *El rachum* conveys God's compassionate attitude towards His people (Deut. 4:31; Ps 86:15; Ps 145:8; Mat 14:14) like a mother tender love and pity towards her child (isa 49:14-15).

And that is the point of all supplication – to move God to act favourably towards us out of His mercy towards us. That is what Yah assures Moses of, amid the grievous sin of Israel. But then He is also a 'God of truth'. Out of His mercy and graciousness, He "lifts iniquity and transgression and sin" (literal Hebrew translation), but He will by no means leave the wicked, who is set in his ways of evil, unpunished. He punishes to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Him (i.e., His ways of life and righteousness).

However, do remember He abounds in "*chesed*" (lovingkindness / goodness), meaning there's always an avenue of grace for a fresh start with Him.

YHWH has a beautiful Name (*Shem*) – holy, noble and glorious. This is the name we come to depend on when we pray in faith passionately and sincerely. HE is *El Rachum*; He cannot close His ears to our prayers. His compassionate nature will not allow Him.

But are we as dedicated, passionate and full of faith as Moses and all the great heroes of faith?

If the answer is yes, keep on praying “the fervent prayer of the righteous” and his promise remains steadfast to you as it was to Jeremiah:

“Moreover, the word of the LORD came unto Jeremiah the second time, while he was yet shut up in the court of the prison, saying,

“Thou saith the LORD, the Maker thereof, the LORD that formed it to establish it, the LORD is His name.

“Call unto Me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not” (Jeremiah 33:1-3).

A time of trouble is not a time to wallow self-pity or resign to ‘your fate’. It is a time of prayer, a time to stir the saving power of Elohim to your side; it is a time of deliverance. He tells us:

“Call upon Me in times of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me” (Ps.50:15).

“Because he hath set his love upon Me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, Because he hath known My name.

“He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

“With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him My salvation” (Ps.91;14-16).

So, church, pray, pray, pray; your miracle, your breakthrough, your deliverance, is just a prayer away. Yahweh lives! Amen!