

Exodus 30:1–10
Does God Hear our Prayers?
January 22, 2011
Sermon Outline

Notes:

I. **What Good is it to be in God's Kingdom?**

A. Vengeance (Cf. Global Report: Persecution Increases)

Romans 12:17–21

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "***Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.***" ²⁰ To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." ...

B. The Sufferings of Job

Romans 8:18–25

¹⁸ For I consider that **the sufferings of this present time** are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For ***the creation waits*** with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ... ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but ***we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly*** as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Psalms 73:1–3ff.

¹ Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. ² But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled, my steps had nearly slipped. ³ For I was envious of the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

Key Idea

God hears the heart cry (i.e. prayers) of his people for salvation & vindication!

II. What Does the Altar of Incense Have to do with Prayer?

- A. Ancient Near East Background
 - 1. King's Tent
 - 2. Worship
- B. Connection with the Bronze Altar
 - 1. The Appearance/Distinct Offerings
 - 2. The Timing of the Offerings (Cf. Exodus 30:7–8 & 29:38-39)
 - 3. The Aroma for God's Pleasure (Ex. 29:41)
- B. Connection with Prayer (Cf. Worship/Prayer)
 - 1. Similarity of Sacrifices & Prayers
 - a. forgiveness
 - b. adoration
 - c. intercession
 - 2. Explicit Connections

Psalm 141:1–2

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

Luke 1:9–10

⁹ according to the custom of the priesthood, he [Zechariah] was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and *burn incense*. ¹⁰ *And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense.*

III. What the Altar Prepares Us to Understand: Our Prayers are Heard & Answered!

- A. The Prayers of the Saints in Revelation

Revelation 5:8–10

⁸ And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before

the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of **incense**, *which are the prayers of the saints*.

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, *for you were slain*, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, ¹⁰ and you have made them **a kingdom** and priests to our God, and they shall *reign on the earth*.”

Revelation 6:9–11

⁹ When he opened the *fifth seal*, I saw under **the altar** *the souls of those who had been slain* for the word of God and for the witness they had borne. ¹⁰ They cried out with a loud voice, “*O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?*” ¹¹ Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

Revelation 8:3–5

³ And another angel came and stood at **the altar** with a golden censer, and he *was given much incense* to offer *with the prayers of all the saints* on the golden altar before the throne, ⁴ and *the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints*, rose before God from the hand of the angel.

⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with fire from the altar and *threw it on the earth*, and there were peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning, and an earthquake.

B. Stated Plainly

2 Thessalonians 1:5–12

⁵ This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of **the kingdom** of God, *for which you are also suffering*— ⁶ since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction

those who afflict you, ⁷ and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, *when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ⁸ in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus.* ⁹ They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, ¹⁰ when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed. ¹¹ **To this end we always pray for you**, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹² *so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him*, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:23–27

²³ And not only the creation, but *we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly* as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. ²⁶ Likewise **the Spirit helps us** in our weakness. For *we do not know what to pray for as we ought*, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with *groanings too deep for words.* ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ...