

God Overanswers Prayer!

One of the most often-heard phrases in the church is, "God answers prayer!" Yet that is only half the truth. The whole truth is, "God overanswers prayer!"

I want to act now as a lawyer before you. I'm going to build a case that will prove to you that in every generation - all through the Bible and continuing to the present day - God always overanswers the prayers of His children. He continually gives much more than we ask for - and often things we wouldn't think to request!

I'll go straight to the biblical record to make my case. It is built on precedent after precedent in history - all proving God overanswers prayer!

1. God over-answered Israel in Hosea 14!

Here is a very clear picture of how God not only answered prayer - but overanswered!

Hosea prophesied to Israel, "You're backslidden - but you're still God's people. Now return to the Lord and pray. *"Take with you words, and... say unto Him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously..."* (HOS 14:2).

Their prayer was simple. All Israel asked God to do was to take away their sin and receive them graciously. "Lord, have mercy. Cleanse us - receive us back into Your grace."

Yet God not only forgave their iniquities - He not only cleansed them and received them back graciously - He also added blessings beyond imagination!

"I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon." (HOS 14:4-7).

Now the dew of heaven is the presence of the Lord. Up to this point there had been drought - everything was dying because God's favor had been taken away. But now, because of true repentance and a heartfelt prayer, God said He would cause life to spring up on all sides. Israel not only would be forgiven, but revived as well! They would grow, become well-rooted, spread out, thrive!

All they asked for was mercy, forgiveness and acceptance. But instead, God opened the windows of heaven and poured on them blessings they dared not even hope for! God largely overanswered their prayer!

Beloved, God has done the same for you! When you repented, all you asked God for was a clean heart, forgiveness and peace. Yet look at how He has overanswered you: He gave you a hungering heart - a

thirst for more and more of Jesus! He gave you eyes to see and ears to hear. He gave you a love for His body.

He has put in you a hatred for sin. He has protected you from a raging, mad devil. He has flooded your soul with hope, joy and gladness!

Jesus has become as your morning dew! He waters your soul daily with His Word. And you are growing - you're not dead or dying, but very much alive in Him!

You asked only to be saved and cleansed. But God has poured out blessing upon blessing to you! He has overanswered you!

2. God overanswered Solomon's prayer!

"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?" (1.KIN 3:9)

Solomon prayed "Lord all I want is wisdom to know how to handle Your people. I only want to be a just king and lord over them."

It was a simple, direct request. But God answered Solomon's prayer in an incredible way:

"And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." (1 KIN 3:11-12).

Here we see how anxious God is to overanswer unselfish prayers! Solomon asked only for an understanding heart of discernment. But God not only gave him the heart he asked for - He also promised to make him wiser than anyone else in the history of mankind!

Yet God didn't stop there. He told Solomon: *"And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days."* (1 KIN 3:13-14).

What an incredible response! God added to Solomon's wisdom blessings, honor and riches such as no other man has ever received. And on top of that, He gave him a prolonged life: "I will lengthen thy days."

Another prayer greatly overanswered!

3. God overanswered Israel regarding the Ammonites!

"Moreover the children of Ammon passed over Jordan to fight... so that Israel was sore distressed" (JUG 10:9).

Ammon had been used by God to correct Israel's sins. And now their army was marching toward Israel! God's people were perplexed and downcast - and they began to confess their sins:

"And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, We have sinned: do Thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day." (verse 15).

They were so haunted by their sin, they couldn't conceive of asking God for anything more than just to spare them. Theirs was the simplest of prayers: "Lord, deliver us just this one time! Don't let us be defeated or overrun by our enemy!"

They prayed for a single victory. But God had something more in mind, and He overanswered their prayer mightily! Not only did Israel get protection - they got the upper hand! They totally subdued the Ammonites!

"So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon to fight against them; and the Lord delivered them into his hands. And he smote them from Aroer, even till thou come to Minnith, even twenty cities... Thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel" (11:32-33).

Not only did God deliver Israel - He also gave them the courage and the direction to defeat the Ammonites! They subdued them from that time on - and they were never troubled by them again! They had total victory!

That is just how God wants to overanswer His people today! Most Christians pray, "Lord, just give me victory in this one battle." But the Lord responds, "I'll give you that - yet I have much more in store for you! I want to subdue your enemy so you won't have to get just one victory at a time. I want you to have a total victory!"

Beloved, He wants to give you power not just to overcome - but to subdue every enemy! He wants you not just to conquer sin - but to be more than a conqueror! Not just to have life but life more abundantly! Not just to have joy - but joy unspeakable and full of glory! Not to be free of fear just for a day, a week or a month but all the days of your life!

4. God overanswered David's prayer for life! "He asked life of thee..." (Psalm 21:4).

David's request was simple - He asked God to save him from dying. And God answered his prayer: *"...and Thou gavest it him, even*

length of days for ever and ever." (verse 4).

But God went much further in overanswering David's prayer. He not only gave him life - He also put a crown on his head, making him king of Israel! And He poured out on him honor and majesty: *"...Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head...honour and majesty hast Thou laid upon him"* (verses 3, 5). David exclaimed, "Lord, You've really laid it on me!"

Yet to top it all off, God added "exceeding gladness": *"For Thou hast made him most blessed for ever: Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance"* (verse 6).

It is no wonder David wrote, *"...with him is plenteous redemption"* (PSA 130:7). He said, "Lord, You not only saved me - but You poured out Your redemption on me!"

The Old Testament patriarchs and prophets knew all about this most generous inclination of God. They knew He delights in being plenteous, abundant, overflowing with blessings to us. Isaiah said: *"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon"* (ISA 55:7).

God not only forgives sin - He overanswers our cry for forgiveness with abundant mercy and pardon!

We Should Not Be Surprised By God's Delight In Overanswering and Overgiving - Because Men and Women Often Do It as Well!

People have overanswered in their giving - how much more our God!

"A Godly husband and wife in Shunem prepared a prophet's chamber in their home for Elisha to use. Elisha was so grateful he sent his servant Gehazi to ask, "You have cared for us - what can we do for you?" But the wife answered, "Nothing."

The servant came back and told Elisha she didn't want anything. But something in the prophet's heart wasn't satisfied. He said, "She's done so much for me!"

Suddenly the servant remembered: She was childless and desired a child. That was it! So Elisha called her: *"And when he had called her, she stood in the door, And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son."* (2.KIN 4:15-16).

Elisha got hold of God, the Lord heard his prayer - and the woman birthed a son! **Although she never asked for anything, she got the desire of her heart!**

Perhaps you remember Naaman, who was healed of leprosy. Elisha told him, "I don't want anything from you. This is a free gift from God." But later Gehazi, in covetousness, stopped Naaman and said, *"My master has had a change of heart. He would like to have "a talent of silver, and two changes of garments"* (2.KIN 5:22).

Now, a talent was a lot of money at that time. It probably could have bought a whole farm. Yet Naaman immediately answered, *"...take two talents"* (verse 23).

The Lord had so touched Naaman - he was so happy and blessed - that he desired to overanswer the request! Something in his heart wished to bless Elisha!

I ask you - how is it we can credit men like Elisha and Naaman with overgiving and yet believe God is any less kind and loving toward us? We often act as if He's stingy! We think we have to pull things out of Him, to agonize before we can get what we desire. No - our Father loves to give to us! He loves to overanswer our cry!

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (MAT 7:11).

Now Let Us Go to the New Testament and Consider an Even More Glorious Vision of God's Overanswering Nature!

Consider these examples: **1. What about the man, sick with palsy, who was brought to Jesus on a bed?**

"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed." (MAT 9:2).

This paralyzed man sought Jesus for healing - but Jesus overanswered his prayer! *"Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee... (Then saith He to the sick of palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house"* (verse 6).

The sick man asked for healing - but Jesus gave him much more. He added the greatest gift He could possibly give! The man got his healing - but even better, he received forgiveness, eternal life, and good cheer to replace his years of sadness!

Jesus had known all along what He was going to do; He knew this man would walk again. But He said, "First, I want to bless you - I want to overanswer you. Yes, I'll heal your body - but I'll also heal your soul and your mind, Now take up your bed and go home!" **2. What about the thief on the cross?**

The thief who hung next to Christ asked only one thing of Him: *"Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"* (LK 23:42). His request was simple: "Think about me."

Jesus truly overanswered this man's request: *"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise"* (verse 43). He said, "I'll remember you - because you're coming with Me!"

Talk about an overanswered prayer! This evil thief could not even conceive of being saved. But he was told he would be waking up in a few hours in paradise - beside Jesus! 3. What about the crippled beggar who asked aims of Peter and John as they entered the temple?

"A certain lame man...seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms" (ACTS 3:2-3). Again, a simple request - just a little money. Yet what a glorious answer this beggar got!

Scripture says, *"Peter fasten(ed) his eyes upon him"* (verse 4). The beggar probably thought, "I'm going to get

a quarter - maybe a dollar. This may be my lucky day." Instead, he got something all the money in the world couldn't buy - a new body!

"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk...and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God" (verses 6-8).

This beggar not only was healed - he also received an outpouring of the Holy Ghost! The spirit of praise came upon him, and he danced and worshiped. That surely is an overanswered prayer! **4. Cornelius prayed diligently for a revelation of God's Word - and God marvelously overanswered his prayer!**

The Lord had spoken to Cornelius about Peter in a vision. So the centurion sent three servants to Joppa to fetch Peter, *"to hear words of thee"* (ACTS 10:22). This was his only request - to hear the gospel: "We want to hear the word of the Lord."

Yet look at how God overanswered his request: *"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And...on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God"* (verses 44-46).

It was as if God was so excited He couldn't wait for Peter to stop preaching - and He moved in to overanswer! The people standing nearby not only got the Word - they also got the Holy Ghost! And not only the Holy Ghost but the gift of tongues. And not only tongues but water baptism! *"And (Peter) commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord"* (verse 48).

Cornelius only wanted the gospel - but God poured out heaven on him!

The New Testament Is Filled With Promises Proving God Loves to OverAnswer the Prayers of His People!

The most familiar promise of all is Ephesians 3:20. We all know it well - yet few of us live as if we believe it: *"Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us..."*

God isn't able just to answer our prayers. He wants to do for us exceedingly abundantly above all we can even imagine! He wants to answer us not according to our puny requests, but according to His riches and might. He wants to give till it runs out!

The Bible tells us elsewhere He is inclined to answer us with abundantly more: *"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over..."* (LUK 6:38).

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit" (1.COR 2:9-10).

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2.PET 1:4).

"...the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy..." (2.TIM 6:17).

God is virtually begging us to ask for great things!

We like to call the Lord "our King." But do you pray large requests worthy of our King's greatness? A king is obligated to care for his subjects. And his people honor him by asking largely, believing he has all they need and will provide it abundantly. Dear saint, you can't call God "king" and then accuse Him of letting one of His subjects continue in need!

A well-known philosopher approached Alexander the Great to make a request because he'd done a good deed for him. He asked the king for a gift of one hundred talents - a fortune in silver - for his daughters.

Everyone present was aghast. But Alexander had a big smile on his face. He said, "Give it to him! It is a request worthy of King Alexander. It is worthy of my wealth and my ability to give!"

I ask you - have you embarrassed God by your puny requests? *"... prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it"* (MAL 3:10).

We Can Grieve God - Even Anger Him - By Not Asking!

We think it is spiritual to say, "I just worship the Lord - I don't ask Him for anything. Whatever He wants for me is good enough." That may sound holy - but it is not, according to the Word of God!

Over and over Jesus implores us, "Ask! Ask in My name! Ask, and you shall receive. Ask anything - whatsoever you ask. Ask what you will. You have not because you ask not. God gives good things to those who ask. He knows what you need even before you ask. Ask the Father in My name, and He will give it to you...."

But we don't have the faith to ask!

"And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear." (ISA 65:24) God says, "You don't have the faith or courage to ask for what I really want to give you. So I'm going to beat you to the punch! I'm going to answer you before you even ask, because your thinking is too small. I know your request won't come near to what I want to do!"

"Moreover the LORD spake again unto Ahaz, saying, Ask thee a sign of the LORD thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the LORD." (ISA 7:10-12) Ahaz's response may have sounded holy - "I won't tempt God." But it angered the Lord! It was hypocritical - because God knew Ahaz had lost his faith long before then!

Ahaz represents the backslidden church - Christians who have lost

their faith in God, who don't believe in His great resources, "They say, "Don't ask God for healing. You're tempting God." That sounds good - but it is hypocritical!

Ahaz didn't want to have his faith tested - because he didn't have any! And **many Christians today don't ask God for anything because it will test a faith they don't have!**

You see, Israel needed deliverance. So God invited Ahaz to ask for confirmation of His faithfulness by any sign the king could think of - from heaven to hell. But Ahaz already had planned to call on King Tigath-Pilneser and Samaria for help. God said, "No! I'm going to fight your battle. I want you to trust in Me!" *"...Hear ye now, O house of David; Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?"* (ISA 7:13)

The Hebrew word for "weary" means "disgust." God was saying, "How long are you going to keep disgusting me because you're afraid to stand on My word? When will you ever learn that I have everything you need - that I will take care of you because I'm King and Lord?"

Isaiah told Israel, "You didn't ask for a sign - but God is going to give you one anyway." *"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel!"* (verse 14).

Beloved this was the greatest overanswer of any prayer in history! The people had cried, "Send us a deliverer," hoping for some man, but God answered, "I'll give you a man. And yes, He will be a deliverer - for all mankind!" God over answered by promising Immanuel!

In Jesus Christ - Immanuel - we have God's most glorious overanswer of all. He is the fullness of God. In Him all riches and blessings abound. He is our great resource. And in Him is exceedingly abundantly more than we could ask or think!

Scripture Says, *"And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground."* (1.SAM 3:19)

This verse means Samuel's prayers as well as his prophecies - none of them fell useless to the ground! Not one prayer went unanswered. Every word of God's promises that Samuel repeated in prayer was a seed that brought forth fruit exceeding abundantly!

Dear saint, when you go to your secret closet, remember: *"...he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him."* (HEB

11:6). Always quote that verse - work it into your system, praying: "I come to You, Jesus, because I know You are God Almighty. You have all the resources I'll ever need. You are beyond my comprehension in greatness - but I believe You reward those who diligently seek You!"

Bring all your requests to God. Pray, believing He delights to overanswer you in His own way and time. Start asking today for the

healing of those whom you thought were hopelessly beyond help. Trust Him for your hopeless financial situation, your unsaved loved ones.

He is going to give to you - to overanswer your prayer - exceedingly abundantly above all you could ask or think!

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