



Prayer and the Transformation of History

Based on Revelation 8



People of many different races, generations, socio-economic status and nationalities are praying together in unity for our region, nation and the world at the Global Day of Prayer New England.

This is the greatest moment in the history of the world to be alive. People have dreamt about this, prophets have foretold this; people have longed to see this. Leif Anderson, a friend of mine and president of the National Association of Evangelicals, freely says that when we get to heaven, people will come running from all over heaven to find out what it was like to be alive at this moment in history. They'll take us by the arm and beg us to tell them what it was like to be alive at this moment in history.

Let me set the scene in Revelation 8. Jesus has revealed himself to John in glorious splendor and majesty. In a vision, John enters heaven. There's an emerald rainbow around the throne. Around the throne are twenty-four elders wearing white robes and golden crowns. Around them are four beasts who shout:

"Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!"

Around them are thousands upon ten thousands of saints, all of them resounding with the praises and wondrous adoration of Christ and His Father.

And then, this moment...

God inaugurates the consummation of the age as a scroll is received by the Son, who is the Lamb looking as if He had been slain. The scroll has seven seals. And when the Lamb breaks the seventh seal, something remarkable happens. This is the most dramatic moment in history, I believe, except for the Cross and Resurrection of

Christ. This is the moment God has been longing for since the foundations of the earth were laid, the moment that will finally set into motion the things that will bring heaven to earth, God amongst His people again, the healing of the Universe, and the restoration of God's relationship with humankind as He has always longed for it to be.

And when he comes to this very moment, watch what He does. When He, that is, the Lamb, opens the seventh seal, there is silence in heaven. When the seventh seal is broken, everything in heaven stops. One minute, three minutes, ten minutes goes by. Not an angel moves. "Heaven is mute and still," Matthew Henry writes. Twenty five minutes, twenty eight minutes.

At thirty minutes, one angel begins to move. And you know that everyone's watching. If there's blood pressure in heaven, it's beginning to rise. If there's adrenalin in heaven, it's starting to course. Something's coming. "And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. (*Rev. 8:2*)" You know how important trumpets are, shofars are. In fact, Jesus is going to come on the blast of the final trumpet.

"Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. Then -- then -- the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it to the earth. And there came peals of thunder, lightning, and an earthquake. (*Rev. 8:3-5*)"

When God comes to the most dramatic moment in all of history except for the Cross and the Resurrection of His own Son, that moment that will lead to the restoration of all things, He comes to that very moment and stops. All of heaven stops with Him.

And they wait. For what? For the prayers of the saints. And it's not until the prayers of the saints arise to the nostrils of God like incense that He gives the permission for the end of all things to come.

Did you have any idea that your prayers were that important to the sovereign workings of the God of the Universe? He has so willed it that His purposes will be accomplished in collaboration with and response to the prayers of the fallen, but the redeemed.

(Bio on next page)

About Robert (Bob) Bakke

Bob is the Executive Director for the Global Day of Prayer North America and also the Executive Producer for Global Broadcasting. Bob, his wife Sally and their four children, live in Burnsville, Minnesota.

For 12 years, Dr. Bakke was the Executive Director of the Evangelical Free Church of America, which focused on the issues of prayer and spiritual awakening. He is a graduate of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (M.Div. 1979 and D.Min. 1993).

In 1993, Dr. Bakke completed a doctoral thesis entitled, *The Concert of Prayer: Back to the Future*. Bob's research reveals that Jonathan Edwards' work entitled *Concert of Prayer* (1742) is a common denominator to three massive international awakenings, scores of 19th century revivals, and the modern missionary movement. *The Concert of Prayer*, then, was one of the most powerful schemes ever advanced in the evangelical world. This work produced Dr. Bakke's book, *The Power of Extraordinary Prayer* (Crossway: 2000).

Presently, he is producing "The Global Day of Prayer" which is scheduled to cover the earth with prayer and the spread of God's Kingdom each Pentecost Sunday between 2005 and 2010. Dallas is his model city for North America.

Dr. Bakke's prayer design is to ensure that the local church in prayer and ministry of the Holy Spirit together becomes the principal agency for the revival of the Church and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom today.