

## **The Lord Answers**

*"Does God always answer our prayers?"* It was a simple, innocent question posed by my 10-year-old daughter on our way home from church. But as my husband and I exchanged looks, we both took a deep breath. We knew the answer was anything but simple.

As a family, we have prayed for miracles -- for our own family, for close friends, for strangers. Sometimes those prayers were answered directly and in ways we understood, but many times it seemed as if God didn't answer at all. Not all sickness is healed. Not all families remain whole. Not every loved one accepts Jesus as their savior. And yet the Bible tells us very clearly that we are called to pray. In fact, in Mark 11:24, Jesus himself tells us that whatever we ask for in prayer will be ours if we simply believe we have received it.

In this week's readings, we see God answer one of the most audacious prayers ever offered. Fighting battles left and right, Joshua boldly asks God to make the sun stand still. He needed more time to defeat the Amorites, so he simply requested more time. The text then tells us that by some miraculous means, God gave Joshua exactly what he requested:

*"So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies, as it is written in the Book of Jashar. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day."  
(Joshua 10:13 NIV)*

Joshua's faith -- so bold and secure -- is staggering. We learned this about him back in Numbers 14, when he and Caleb tried to convince the Israelites that the Lord would help them take the Promised Land. Now, nearly 40 years later, Joshua was leading the charge to finally take possession of the land. He knew he was fighting the Lord's battles, so he was able to confidently ask for the impossible. Did he know for sure that God would answer his request? Maybe not. But He believed in God's provision enough to ask.

The chapters that follow show us God's continued favor and provision over Joshua as he fights battle after battle, winning parts of The Promised Land and eventually dividing them up among the tribes. The book closes with Joshua encouraging the Israelite leaders to follow his example by remaining faithful to God and obeying His commands. The Lord, he reminds them, has been faithful and has delivered on every single one of His promises:

*"You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed." (Joshua 23:14 NIV)*

The question remains: Does God always answer our prayers? I believe these passages tell us that He does. Sometimes He answers prayers immediately and specifically, while other times it may take 40 years and a few hard battles to experience His provision. And, yes, sometimes he answers in ways we do not understand. But the book of Joshua teaches us that our God is a God of His Word. He keeps His promises and, more importantly, He responds to faithful obedience.

In the end, it is never a question of God's ability to follow through. He came through for Israel, and he came through for Joshua. Perhaps the real question, then, is do we believe enough in God's provision to ask for the impossible?

**~ Lisa Bonnema**

**March 25th Readings**

JOSHUA 10:1-12:6

**March 26th Readings**

JOSHUA 12:7-15:19

**March 27th Readings**

JOSHUA 15:20-17:18

**March 28th Readings**

JOSHUA 18:1-19:48

**March 29th Readings**

JOSHUA 19:49-21:45  
1 CHRONICLES 6:54-81

**March 30th Readings**

JOSHUA 22:1-24:33

**March 31st Readings**

JUDGES 1:1-3:30