

RANSOMED HEART



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The Zap View of Prayer



Christians have been told over and over that God is almighty. And indeed he is—the God of four hundred billion billion suns. We have been told he is also sovereign. And indeed he is. Perhaps out of respect, we have adopted the notion that if he is going to act, he is going to act quickly. Bam. Zap. (If we are honest, I think we adopted that perspective because it also relieves us of strenuous prayer.) But is this what we see in so many of these biblical accounts?

Clearly, God does not just zap Peter out of prison. The church has to pray “strenuously” for him; the event goes on into the night. He does not zap the promised rain either—Elijah had to climb to the top of the mountain, and there he prayed eight rounds of intervening prayer. God did send the angel to Daniel the first day he prayed—but it took *three weeks* for him to break through. God didn’t just zap Joseph, Mary, and the child Jesus down into safety in Egypt—an angel had to come to them as well; they had to flee in the night.

Are you getting the picture? Prayer is not just asking God to do something and waiting for him to zap it.

Intervening prayer often takes time.

And it takes *repetition*, repeatedly intervening and invoking. (Eight rounds for Elijah).