

except in one particular aspect—Jesus is now the avenue of prayer to God. Hear what Jesus himself said about this:

*“And whatever you ask in **My name**...”*
(John 14:13).

*“...and whatever you ask the Father in **My name**...”*
(John 15:16).

*“...Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in **My name**...”*
(John 16:23).

*“In that day you will ask in **My name**...”*
(John 16:26).

In Romans 1:8 the apostle Paul plainly declared, “...I thank my God **through** Jesus Christ for you all.” Again, in Romans 7:25, he said, “I thank God – **through** Jesus Christ our Lord!”

In prayer Jesus is our advocate—our intercessor. The apostle John said, “And if anyone sins, we have an **advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1), and in Hebrews 7:25 we read, “...He always lives to make **intercession**...”

While the scriptures convey that prayers are to be offered to the Father *through* Jesus, they never teach that prayers are to be offered to Jesus.

Important Questions

Do the scriptures teach that it is essential that prayers be offered to Jesus?

Do the scriptures teach that praying to Jesus accomplishes anything that praying to God would not?

The obvious answer to both of these questions is no. Beyond doubt, this confirms that praying to Jesus is unnecessary.

Through whom would prayers to Jesus be offered?

The fact that conflicting answers are given to this question shows a lack of clarity and certainty among those who hold this view. This illustrates another serious weakness in this position.

Is it scriptural to pray to the Holy Spirit?

Some argue that since Jesus is Deity prayers can be offered to Him. It must be noted, however, that the Holy Spirit is also Deity (Acts 5:3,4). So, to be consistent, those who condone praying to Jesus are compelled to also advocate praying to the Holy Spirit. This shows the slippery slope on which those who hold this view find themselves.

Indeed, prayer is a vitally important part of the Christian's life. Therefore, proper attention must be given to what the scriptures reveal about this wonderful privilege, for the sincere Christian desires to engage in prayer as God has directed.

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TO WHOM ARE WE TO PRAY?

IS PRAYER
TO BE OFFERED
ONLY TO THE
FATHER?
OR CAN PRAYER
BE OFFERED TO
JESUS
AS WELL?

Jon Gary Williams

Prayer fills an essential role within the Lord's church and is an indispensable function in the life of every Christian. Sadly, some today embrace a type of prayer which is foreign to New Testament teaching—that of praying to Jesus. Following are some key truths regarding biblical prayer.

Jesus taught that prayer is to be offered to the Father

In His sermon on the mount Jesus spoke clearly on several matters of truth, one of which was His teaching on prayer. He explained that prayer is to be offered to the Father. In His words: “*In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name...*” (Matthew 6:9). [all texts NKJV]

Later in this same discourse Jesus emphasized once again, “*Ask and it will be given you...*” (Matthew 7:7). Then, in verse 11, He explained who they were to ask. “*...how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him.*”

On yet another occasion, Jesus repeated His statement given in the sermon on the mount. When His disciples specifically asked Him to teach them to pray, His response was plain: “*When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven...*” (Luke 11:2).

Jesus' words could not have been more evident. Our Father in Heaven is to be the recipient of prayer! If prayer can be offered to someone

else, surely Jesus would have made mention of this, especially if He knew that prayer was also to be offered to Him. The Lord's silence here speaks volumes.

Examples of prayers being addressed only to the Father

A great many passages attest to the fact that in New Testament times prayers were directed only to the Father. Here are but a few:

Acts 4:24 “...they raised their voice to **God**...”

Acts 16:25 “...at midnight Paul and Silas were praying... unto **God**...”

Acts 27:35 “...he took bread and gave thanks to **God**...”

Romans 10:1 “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to **God**...”

Romans 15:30 “...that ye strive together with me in your prayers to **God** for me.”

I Corinthians 1:4 “I thank my **God** always concerning you...”

II Corinthians 13:7 “Now I pray to **God** that you do no evil...”

Ephesians 3:14 “For this reason I bow my knees unto the **Father**...”

Ephesians 5:20 “...giving thanks always for all things to **God the Father**...”

Philippians 1:3,4 “I thank my **God** upon every remembrance of you... in every prayer...”

Philippians 4:6 “...in everything by prayer... let

your requests be made known unto **God**...”

Colossians 1:3 “We give thanks to the **God and Father**... praying always...”

I Thessalonians 3:9,10 “For what thanks can we render to **God** for you... night and day praying exceedingly...”

II Thessalonians 1:11 “Therefore we also pray always for you that our **God** would count you worthy...”

II Thessalonians 2:13 “But we are bound to give thanks to **God** always for you...”

Revelation 8:3,4 “...the prayers of all the saints ...ascended up before **God**...”

That our Heavenly Father is the only One to whom we are to pray is confirmed by an abundance of scriptures. Contrast this to the fact that there are no such scriptures demonstrating prayers being offered to Jesus. For example, we do not read, “Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray **Christ**...” (reference Acts 8:22); or, “...but constant prayer was offered to **Jesus**...” (reference Acts 12:5). If early Christians did pray to Jesus, why is the New Testament void of any statements to this effect?

Jesus is the avenue of prayer to the Father

What role does Jesus play in prayer? Prior to the coming of Christ, prayers were offered directly to God. This practice has not changed in the Christian dispensation in which we live,