COMPONENTS AND CONTENT OF PRAYER



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

II. THE OBJECTIVE CONDITION OF PRAYER....4

A. The Principle....4

B. The Role of the Father....5

1. The Only Addressee: God the Father....5

2. The Old Testament Prayers....5

3. The New Testament Prayers....5

C. The Role of the Son....6

1. The Meaning....6

2. The Scriptures....7

a. John 14:13....7

b. John 14:14....7

c. John 15:16....7

d. John 16:23....7

e. John 16:24....7

f. John 16:26....8

3. A Key Example....8

4. Our High Priest of Prayer....8

a. Hebrews 4:14-16....8

b. I John 2:1-2....8

D. The Role of the Holy Spirit....8

1. The Meaning....8

2. The Scriptures 8

a. Ephesians 5:18-20 9

b. Ephesians 6:18 9

c. Jude 20 9

3. The Prayer of the Holy Spirit for Us.....9

4. The Implications 9

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Whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight.
I John 3:22



This Messianic Bible Study is a continuation of our study, "The Conditions of Prayer" in mbs148. In the first part of the study, we dealt with "The Subjective Conditions of Prayer."

II. THE OBJECTIVE CONDITION OF PRAYER

A. The Principle

The principle for the objective condition is that prayer is to be addressed to the Father, through the Son, by means of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:18 states: *for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.*
All three members of the Trinity are found in this verse: *for through him* [the Son] *we both have our access in one Spirit, unto the Father.* Prayer is to the Father, through the Son, by means of the Holy Spirit.

A second passage is Ephesians 3:14-17: *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.*
Here again all three members are mentioned, and the point is the same: prayer is to the Father, through the Son, by means of the Holy Spirit.

A third passage that teaches this same principle is Colossians 3:17: *And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*
Here two members of the trinity are mentioned, but the point is the same: our prayers are to God the Father, but they are through the Son.

NOTES

B. The Role of the Father

All prayers are to be addressed to God the Father. In this regard, three things should be noted.

1. The Only Addressee: God the Father

First, prayers should not be addressed to the Son, or to the Spirit, or to anyone else. Some people feel it is permissible to address our prayers to the Son on the basis of Acts 7:59: *Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit.*
Stephen, of course, spoke to the *Lord Jesus* directly. Actually, Acts 7:59 is not a prayer, but it is a commitment of the soul and spirit at death. Furthermore, Stephen, at that moment, was actually seeing Yeshua (Jesus) in a vision. So, it is not really a prayer as such. There is no example of any prayer being addressed to the Son.

Prayer is not to be addressed to the Holy Spirit either. We have no biblical record of addressing prayers to the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, we should never address our prayers to angels or saints. That, too, goes contrary to Scripture. Prayer should not be addressed to the Son, nor to the Holy Spirit, nor to angels, nor to saints.

2. The Old Testament Prayers

The second thing concerning prayer being addressed to the Father is that, in the Old Testament, prayers were simply addressed to God in general. There was no clear concept of a Trinity in the Old Testament.
For example: Psalm 5:2 states: *For unto you do I pray.*

Psalm 42:8 is: *a prayer unto the God of my life.*

Psalm 69:13: *But as for me, my prayer is unto you.*

And, Jeremiah 29:7: *pray unto Jehovah for it.*
In the Old Testament, prayers were simply addressed to God in general.

3. The New Testament Prayers

The third point is that with New Testament revelation, we learn that prayer must now be addressed directly to the Father. This is the way all New Testament prayers are addressed.
For example: Matthew 6:9: *Our Father who are in heaven.*

In Luke 11:2: the prayer is addressed to: *Father, Hallowed be your name.*

In John 15:16 and 16:23, Jesus said: *ask of the Father.*

Acts 4:24 says: *And they, when they heard it, lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, O Lord.*

In Ephesians 1:16-17, Paul addressed the prayer to: *the Father of glory.*

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Ephesians 3:14 states: ... *I bow my knees unto the Father.*

And, Ephesians 5:20: *giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.*
The clear teaching of the New Testament is that our prayers must be directed and addressed to God the Father.

Our greatest example of prayer life is from Yeshua Himself. While Yeshua would not have addressed a prayer to Himself, He could have addressed His prayers to the Holy Spirit if doing so were legitimate. But He never addressed a prayer to the Holy Spirit; all His prayers were addressed specifically to God the Father.

There are six examples of this in one chapter of John. Six different times as Jesus was praying, He addressed God the Father in John 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, and 25.
Verse1 states: *These things spoke Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify your Son, that the son may glorify you.*
Verse 5 states: *And now, Father, glorify you me with your own self with the glory which I had with you before the world was.*
Verse 11 states: *And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are.*
Verse 21 states: *that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that you did send me.*
Verse 24 states: *Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which you have given me: for you loved me before the foundation of the world.*
Verse 25 states: *O righteous Father, the world knew you not, but I knew you; and these knew that you did send me..*
Therefore, if we follow the prayer life of Yeshua as our example, every prayer is to be addressed to God the Father. A correct prayer, a right prayer, a legitimate prayer is one which is addressed to God the Father.

C. The Role of the Son

The role of the Son is that prayer is to be prayed through the Son, meaning, in the name of the Son. Concerning this, four points should be noted.

1. The Meaning

What is the meaning of praying "in the name of Jesus"? It is the means by which we pray. It is through the Son. To pray in His name means, "to pray in His authority." We have the authority to approach God the Father, and Yeshua has given us that authority; so we pray in the name of Yeshua.

We also pray "for His sake," which means "for His glory" according to Colossians 3:17. So, praying in the name of Jesus means to pray in His authority as well as for His sake and for His glory.

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It means we have regard for the Person in whose name a thing is requested. Likewise, this is also the ground on which it is granted. In other words, when we approach God the Father in the name of Yeshua, we are asking God to answer our prayer, not because of our merits, but because of Jesus' merits, in whose name we pray. We are asking God to answer our prayer because of our relationship with Yeshua the Son.

We are asking the Father on the basis of our being "in the Messiah," which is our position since our salvation. We are to pray on the basis of our new and exalted position in the Messiah.

Thus, to pray in Jesus' name means to pray in His authority, and for His sake, and for His glory.

2. The Scriptures

The second thing about the role of the Son is that six times we are admonished to pray in the name of Yeshua. All six examples are in the Gospel of John.

a. John 14:13

First is John 14:13: *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*
In this verse, prayer is directly associated with the accomplishment of the activity. There is a conditional clause: we can have our prayers answered only if we pray in the name of Jesus.

b. John 14:14

The second example is John 14:14: *If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do.*
The word *that* specifies a specific thing asked for, in accordance with the condition, will be granted. And the condition is to pray in His name, and Yeshua Himself will do the answering.

c. John 15:16

The third example is John 15:16: *whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*
In this case, prayer is directed to the Father in the name of Jesus. God conditions His actions on the fact that the asking was in the name of Jesus.

d. John 16:23

The fourth example is John 16:23: *If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name.*

e. John 16:24

The fifth example is John 16:24: *ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full.*
Here is a dispensational distinctive. Up to this point, whenever they prayed, they did not pray in Yeshuas' name. But now they are to do

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just that. This is part of the dispensational change between the Old and the New, between the Dispensation of Law and the Dispensation of Grace.

f. John 16:26

The sixth admonition is in John 16:26: *In that day ye shall ask in my name.*

This also emphasizes a dispensational change.

3. A Key Example

The third point concerning the role of the Son is the key example of someone who was praying in Jesus' name.

This is found in Ephesians 5:20: *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.*
Notice the prayer is addressed to God the Father, but it is prayed *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

4. Our High Priest of Prayer

The fourth thing concerning the role of the Son is that the Messiah is now our High Priest of prayer. This is the teaching of two passages.

a. Hebrews 4:14-16

The first is Hebrews 4:14-16. The point of verse 14 is that we now have a High Priest in Heaven. The point of verse 15 is that this High Priest who we now have in Heaven knows what it feels like for humans on earth.

Verse 16 says: *Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, Because Yeshua is our High Priest of prayer, we need to make use of Him.*

b. I John 2:1-2

The second passage is I John 2:1-2, which states that we now have *an Advocate with the Father.*

D. The Role of the Holy Spirit

The point here is that prayer should be "in the Holy Spirit"; prayer should be by means of the Holy Spirit. Here, too, four things should be noted.

1. The Meaning

First, what does it mean to pray by means of, or "in, the Holy Spirit"? It means to pray in the "sphere of "praying along the same lines, about the same things, in the same name as the Holy Spirit. We are to pray the same thing that the Holy Spirit is praying. The reason that these kinds of prayers are guaranteed to be answered is because we are praying the same prayer that He prays. When we are not doing so, then our prayers may not be answered.

2. The Scriptures

The second thing to point out are the Scriptures regarding the role of

the Holy Spirit in prayer. There are three Scriptures, which teach this.

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a. Ephesians 5:18-20

The first is Ephesians 5:18-20. Verse 18 states: *be filled with the Spirit.* He does not say to pray to the Holy Spirit, but when we are *filled with* the Holy Spirit, we pray with the proper reliance on the Holy Spirit. Thus, in verse 20, we are told to: *giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.*

Our prayer is to be addressed to God the Father in the name of the Son, but our prayers are in accordance with the Holy Spirit.

b. Ephesians 6:18

The second passage is Ephesians 6:18: *with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit.*

The context of this passage is praying in the realm of spiritual warfare.

c. Jude 20

The third passage is Jude 20: *praying in the Holy Spirit*. The context here is that of *building up* the faith. When we pray in the Holy Spirit, we are *building up* the faith.

3. The Prayer of the Holy Spirit for Us

The third thing about the role of the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit prays for and with us. Romans 8:26-27 states that the Holy Spirit prays in order to help our infirmities. The Greek word for "help" is used only here and in Luke 10:40. It means practical help. The Holy Spirit gives practical help in our prayer life.

The problem is that: we know not how to pray as we ought. The solution is that: *the Spirit* [of God] *makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered* (Rom. 8:26).

The result is that: *he* [the Father] *that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit*. The Father always answers the prayers of the Holy Spirit. The reason for the answer is because: [the Spirit himself] *makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God* (Rom. 8:27).

Galatians 4:6 also teaches that: *God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

The Holy Spirit is praying for us and with us.

4. The Implications

Fourth, the implication of the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer is twofold. The first implication is that we will not ask God to do that which He chooses not to do. The second implication is that the opposite of praying in the Spirit is praying in the flesh.✡

IF YOU ENJOYED THIS BIBLE STUDY, DR. FRUCHTENBAUM RECOMMENDS:

MBS144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, and 151.