

TO WHOM SHALL WE PRAY?
Matthew 6:9-15

Introduction:

1. An African tribesman implores his ancestors to send rain.
2. A Hindu arises early to pray to the image of Durga, the mother goddess.
3. A Shintoist offers food and prayers to the ancestors and gods whose names and pictures are on the “god shelf” in his home.
4. Millions of Muslims pray to Allah five times a day facing Mecca.
5. A Roman Catholic prays to an image of Mary when in special need.
6. Does it really make any difference whom we pray to?

Discussion:

- I. **JESUS TAUGHT US TO PRAY TO THE FATHER (Matt. 6:9).**
 - A. **There are three Persons in the Godhead.**
 1. **God, the Father, is the Originator of the Plan of Redemption (John 3:16; Eph. 3:8-11).**
 2. **God, the Son, is the Redeemer of lost man (Eph. 1:7).**
 3. **God, the Holy Spirit, is the Revealer of God’s will (Jno. 16:13).**
 - B. **Christians are the children of God (1 Jno. 3:1).**
 1. **We cry “Abba Father” (Rom. 8:15).**
 2. **Sinners cannot address God as “Father” for Satan is their father (Jno. 8:44).**
 - C. **God’s name must be hallowed.**
 1. **To “hallow” is to regard as holy, sacred.**
 2. **If one uses God’s name as a curse word or exclamation, he shows contempt for it.**
 3. **“Holy and reverend is His name” (Psa. 111:9).**
- II. **JESUS DID NOT TEACH US TO PRAY TO HIM.**
 - A. **Prayers directed to Jesus are becoming popular.**
 1. **Songs encourage it:**
 - a. **“Tell it to Jesus.”**
 - b. **“Just a Little Talk With Jesus.”**
 2. **Jesus taught, “When you pray, say, ‘Our Father in Heaven’” (Luke 11:2).**

- B. Prayers are to be made in Jesus' name.**
1. "In His name" means "by His authority" (Matt. 18:20).
 2. We are baptized "in His name" (Acts 2:38).
 3. Whatever we do in His service must be "in His name" (Matt. 28:18; Col. 3:17).
- C. Jesus has a unique position between God and man.**
1. He is our Mediator {"Go between"} (1 Tim. 2:5).
 2. He is our High Priest (Heb. 4:14).
 3. He is our Advocate (1 Jno. 2:1).
- D. Jesus taught His disciples to pray in His name in the new dispensation.**
1. "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (Jno. 14:13,14).
 2. "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you (Jno. 16:23).
- E. Does the Bible contain prayers addressed to Jesus?**
1. "Stephen prayed to Jesus," say some (Acts 7:55-60).
 2. Stephen's case was unique; he was permitted to see Jesus in Heaven much as Saul saw Him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:4-6).
 - a. He spoke directly to Jesus just as Paul did.
 - b. This is not parallel to prayer.
 - c. It does not contradict what the Lord Himself said about praying in His name.
 3. Did Paul pray to Jesus when he exclaimed, " Marantha, {O Lord, come"} (1 Cor. 15:22)?
 - a. It "most probably means 'The Lord is at hand.'that phrase had become a watchword and a password. It summed up the vital hope of the early church, and Christians whispered it to each other, identified each other by it, in a language which the heathen could not understand" (Wm. Barclay; The Letters to the Corinthians, p. 188).
 - b. "This is an Aramaic expression on which the scholars are not agreed as to whether it means 'the Lord has come,' or 'our Lord has come,' or 'our Lord cometh,' or 'our Lord, come.' ... the saying is admonitory. It warns that at any moment they may have to answer for their shortcomings" (Lipscomb and Shepherd, GA Com. on 1 Cor. pp. 260, 261).

III. WE MUST NOT PRAY TO ANYONE BUT THE FATHER.

- A. We must not pray to Mary.**
1. She was blessed to be the mother of Jesus, but given no special position (Luke 1:28).
 2. She had no special power with her Son (Jno. 2:3-5).
 3. Jesus put His disciples on the same level as His mother and brothers (Matt. 12:46-50).
 4. Neither Acts nor the epistles give Mary special emphasis.
 5. Jesus, not Mary, is our Mediator (1 Tim. 2:5).
- B. We must not pray to the “saints.”**
1. “Saints” (holy ones) are all who are set apart to do God’s will (1 Cor. 1:2).
 2. All Christians are saints.
 3. We have no merit, but are saved by grace (Eph. 2:8,9).
- C. We must not pray to Allah.**
1. The god of Islam is not the God of the Bible.
 2. Muslims deny Jesus is the Son of God:

“As they say, the Beneficent has taken to himself a son. Certainly you make an abominable assumption...It is not worthy of Allah that he should take to himself a son” (Qu’ran, sura 19:88-92).
- D. We must not pray to angels.**
1. Worship of angels is forbidden (Col. 2:18; Rev. 22:8,9).
 2. Angels are “ministering spirits” (Heb. 1:14).
- E. We must not pray to pagan gods.**
1. The “mother earth” is revered by environmental new agers.
 2. Indians pray to “the great spirit.”
 3. Elijah’s contest with the prophets of Baal show the futility of praying to anyone but Jehovah (1 Kings 18:21-39).

Conclusion:

1. Prayer is a privilege God has given to His children.
2. He is our Father Who delights in supplying His children with our every need.
3. Christians have access to the Father through the Son.
4. Do you have the right to call upon God as “Father?”

