

What About Praying to Jesus?

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A preaching brother once defined scriptural prayer as “the conversation of a spiritual child of God with his heavenly Father.”¹ This definition is probably as good as anyone could give of the view that New Testament Christians as a whole have supported across the years. But though most Christians would still agree even now, there has arisen in some circles over the last twenty years or so an idea that Christians should also pray to Jesus and maybe even to the Holy Spirit. It has seemed rather odd to me, though, that most of those who advocate praying to Jesus do not lead such prayers in worship assemblies.

Occasionally a prayer leader will simply get mixed up, especially at the Lord’s Table, maybe saying something about “this bread that represents your body that was given for us.” On rare occasions I have heard a prayer leader throw in a statement or two to Jesus and/or the Holy Spirit. Maybe it was only a reluctance to offend that kept them from saying more. However, I was in a worship assembly of a very large congregation a few years ago where it was different. A prayer leader began by addressing the “Lord.” Now since either the Father or the Son (or even the Holy Spirit, for that matter) can be called Lord, it was not clear as to whom he was praying. Throughout the prayer he just continued saying “Lord.” But at the end of the prayer the addressee became clear when he said, “In your Father’s name we pray. Amen.”

Subsequent to that, I visited another large congregation. A young man who was presiding at the Lord’s Supper began leading the prayer for the bread. He first addressed the Father, then prayed to Jesus, and then prayed for a while to the Holy Spirit. In leading prayer for the cup, he did the same thing. I guess it seemed reasonable to him that if you can pray to the Father you can pray to Jesus, and if you can pray to Jesus you can pray to the Holy Spirit too. After the assembly I asked one of the elders, “Does the eldership here endorse praying to Jesus and the Holy Spirit like we heard this morning?” He said, “No, and we’ll talk to him about it.” Just recently, I was in another assembly of a very large congregation, and again prayer for the Lord’s Supper was addressed to Jesus. When I expressed concern to an elder about it, I found that he was just as concerned as I was. He quickly replied, “We’ll definitely talk to him about it.”

In years past, I felt that this practice was being generated on the campuses of some of our colleges more than anywhere else, and therefore was probably occurring mainly among young people in their devotionals. But over the past few years I have encountered it again and again in congregational assemblies. As far as our congregations as a whole are concerned, I do not know whether praying to Jesus is still a rare occurrence or a growing trend. We would probably have to take a survey to find out. But just in case it is the latter, I think the subject needs to be explored anew.

I answered three questions on this subject in the first volume of my publication *The Restorer* in October of 1981. I also addressed the subject more thoroughly in both oral and written form in the 1983 Fort Worth Lectures on *The Person and Life of Christ*. But I would like to look at the subject again in an even more expanded way. At the close of his excellent chapter on “The Prayer Life of Jesus,” James Stewart asked the question:

“Ought we to offer prayer to Christ as well as to the Father?”² This is the question to consider. May prayers be addressed to Jesus?

PRELIMINARY MATTERS

In order to be sure the question is understood, let us take a brief look at the terms involved. In the New Testament several words are used to indicate prayer. One of the most comprehensive statements about it is Paul’s reference to “supplication, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings” (1 Tim. 2:1). Only one Greek verb – *proseuchomai* – exclusively indicates prayer and means praying in general. There are some other verbs that may or may not indicate prayer, depending on the context: *deomai* – to ask or implore, *euchomai* – to wish or pray, *aiteo* – to ask or request, *erotao* – to request or ask a question, *eucharisteo* – to give thanks, and other associated terms.

There is no need to distinguish between these various words.³ We may simply say that prayer is a person’s verbal approach to the invisible God, or what he considers to be deity, or to other beings or objects (real or imaginary) that are considered to be able to hear and answer prayer. However, it would not be true to say that this includes any verbal communication addressed to Deity in any situation. The apostles directed verbal communication to Jesus for three and a half years, but none of that was considered prayer. Otherwise, the apostles would not have said, “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1). Nor does prayer necessitate thinking of the addressee as Deity. When Catholics pray to “saints,” it is not to ascribe deity to them, but it is simply because they think those “saints” are in a position to do something for them. The key concept of prayer is that it is addressed to one who is not literally present on earth but who is able (or conceived to be able) to provide supernatural help.

A good reason to study this question of praying to Jesus is that prayer, like any other spiritual belief or activity, is subject to divine authority. God must be worshiped “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Therefore, we must pray not according to our whims or desires but in accordance with Bible teaching. Our attitude should always be: “not as I will, but as You will” (Matt. 26:39). So the question is this: Does the Bible reveal that it is permissible to pray to Jesus?

THE CONTROVERSY

Early Christian Writers

A perusal of history reveals that uninspired writers of the early centuries did not think it was proper to pray to Jesus. In a chapter on “Some Early Prayers,” Everett Ferguson quotes a number of them and then concludes: “Thus there was summed up the doctrine of prayer: God was the goal, Christ the Mediator, and the Holy Spirit the sphere in which the church prays. Christian prayer was addressed commonly to God the Father.”⁴ Origen, a third-century Alexandrian writer, specifically affirmed that all prayer must be offered to the Father.⁵

Denominational Writers

A brief survey of denominational writers indicates that there came to be a divergence of views on whether Jesus should be the recipient of prayers. Some are on record as indicating that the Father alone should be addressed. Morton Smith wrote, “Jesus taught that Christian believers are to approach God as their heavenly Father.”⁶ Lambert, writing in the *ISBE*, said that “Christian prayer in its full New Testament meaning is prayer addressed to God as Father, in the name of Christ as Mediator. . . .”⁷ Bevan, also writing in the same volume, concluded that prayer “should be addressed to God.”⁸

On the other hand, Charles Hodge affirmed that prayer might be addressed either to the triune God or to the Father, Son or Holy Spirit as distinct persons. He added that the examples of prayer addressed to Christ in the New Testament are “very numerous.”⁹ Hendriksen represented Christ not only as the one in whose name prayer must be offered but also as the object of prayer and the hearer of prayer.¹⁰ *The New Bible Dictionary* claimed (without citing any scriptural proof) that Jesus taught that “prayer is now offered to Him, as it was offered to Him when He was on earth.”¹¹ Alfred Gibbs, in his otherwise excellent book on worship, included an appendix on “Direct Address to the Lord Jesus” in which he tried to prove in thirty-two pages that we might pray to Jesus.¹² And Herbert Lockyer, in his great survey of the prayers of the Bible, affirmed that “not only are we authorized to use the peerless name of Jesus, we have His word that he will hear and answer our prayers.”¹³

Views of the Brethren

In the early days of the Restoration Movement, it appears that all were agreed. Alexander Campbell once wrote, “What an honor to be permitted to speak to God in the name of his Son!”¹⁴ Campbell presented another essay on prayer in which he spoke of “prayer to God” and our being “in company with God alone” as we “converse with our Father who is in heaven.”¹⁵ David Walk defined prayer as “the offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.”¹⁶ C.R. Nichol wrote, “A scriptural prayer is a religious act entreating the grant of a favor, or forgiveness of trespasses, and is directed to Jehovah God, through Jesus Christ, in whose power the answer resides.”¹⁷

Over and over, these early Restoration writers referred to praying to the Father. It is noteworthy that none of them, as far as this writer knows, ever said that we could also pray to Jesus. If they exclusively mentioned God the Father as the proper recipient of prayers, and it seems that they did, it demonstrates what they believed.

From the foregoing, it appears that especially in years past our brethren stood where the writers of the early centuries stood – that prayer should be addressed only to the Father. And this seems to still be the prevailing view. Burton Coffman is probably representative of the majority. Commenting on John 16:23, he said, “These words show that Jesus intended that his followers should pray not to himself, but to the Father in Jesus’ name.”¹⁸

However, in more recent times some members of the Lord’s church have advocated that Christians might also pray to Jesus. Frank Pack wrote that “it is proper to

address prayer to the Son” and that “the early church offered prayers directly to Jesus.”¹⁹ When I asked Alton Howard, the editor of one of our popular hymn books, why *Just a Little Talk With Jesus* should be included in the book, he replied by citing three scriptures, which he thought authorized praying to Jesus.²⁰ Among published articles that have appeared, Ray Hawk affirmed the following:

When Jesus was on earth, the disciples worshiped him. Thomas spoke to him in a very personal way and called him Lord and God. Less than fifty days later, Jesus ascended into heaven. Are we to assume that after that event, Thomas or any other disciple could not worship Jesus or speak to him in a personal, direct way? Could they no longer make any personal, direct statement to Jesus?²¹

Brother Hawk went on to charge that the average Christian today “overlooks Jesus” until he offers the prayer in the name of Christ at the end. He asked, “Was this the practice of the first century Christians?” Then, citing some supposed instances from the New Testament, he said, “If it was scriptural for these to pray directly to Jesus in a personal way, why is it unscriptural for us to do so?” In the remainder of this article I will answer the above question and I will endeavor to show that various passages used to support the practice of praying to Jesus are used wrongly.

JESUS AUTHORIZED PRAYER TO THE FATHER

Jesus’ Personal Example

The example of Jesus is important to us today, for we learn what we are to do by looking to him (Heb. 12:2). Paul said, “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ” (1 Cor. 11:1). As we survey the prayers of Jesus, let us be asking, “*To whom did Jesus pray?*” Did he ever pray to the Holy Spirit or only to the Father?

In the life of Jesus, some twenty-six instances of prayer are mentioned. Not many of his prayers have the words recorded for us, but *every* prayer that *is recorded* shows that Jesus uniformly prayed to his Father. After condemning the cities of opportunity where he preached, Jesus twice addressed God as “Father,” saying, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth” (Matt. 11:25-26). Another prayer with identical wording was uttered at the return of the seventy (Luke 10:21). At the tomb of Lazarus Jesus prayed, saying, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me” (John 11:41).

In the last week of his public ministry Jesus said, “Father, glorify Your name” (John 12:28). On the night of his betrayal Jesus offered the famous “high-priestly” intercessory prayer of John 17. Five times in that prayer he addressed God as “Father” and twice he referred to Himself as “Your Son.” In Gethsemane Jesus poured out his soul to the “Father” three times (Matt. 26:39-44). Then, on the cross Jesus prayed, saying, “Father forgive them” (Luke 23:34). He also cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matt. 27:46). These prayers were offered to “Him who was able to save Him from death” (Heb. 5:7) – the one to whom Jesus was “a Son” (v. 8).

Lest someone say, “Well, after all, Jesus had only the Father to pray to, since he could obviously not pray to himself,” we should remember that the Holy Spirit is Deity too. But though Jesus was begotten by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35; Matt. 1:18), and though God had given him the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34), and though he

offered Himself on the cross “through the eternal Spirit” (Heb. 9:14), his prayers were only to the Father.

Peter wrote that Christ left us an “example” that we should “follow His steps” (1 Pet. 2:21). Peter evidently includes the entire pattern of Jesus’ holy life, but he specifically focuses on our Lord’s sufferings. He said that in his suffering Jesus “committed Himself to Him who judges righteously” (v. 23), an obvious reference to the dying prayer uttered from the cross: “Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit” (Luke 23:46). Since we are told to follow Jesus’ example, his prayers to *the Father* throughout his life and at the moment of his death serve as the exclusive pattern for our practice today ***if no authority can be found*** for praying also to someone else. So we turn to the teachings of the New Testament, beginning with our Lord’s.

Jesus’ Teachings on Prayer

The teachings of Jesus confirm his example that prayer should be offered to the Father alone. The Sermon on the Mount, the model prayer, the parables on prayer, incidental sayings, and the last discourse of Jesus all combine together to present the same picture.

In the instructions on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matt. 6:6). He added, “For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him” (v. 8). Jesus then gave an example prayer (vv. 9-13). This is one of the notable teachings of Jesus. He began by saying, “In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven” (v. 9). Jesus taught his disciples that as a result of such prayers the “Father” would forgive sins (vv. 14-15). In the next chapter, he said that just as an earthly father knows how to give good gifts to his children, our Father in heaven will give good things to them that ask “Him” (Matt. 7:11).

On another occasion, in response to the disciples’ request, “Lord, teach us to pray,” Jesus instructed: “When you pray, say: our Father in heaven” (Luke 11:1-2). Then, after a parable on prayer (Luke 11:5-8), Jesus said that the “Father” would “give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him” (v. 13). It would therefore have been wrong for those disciples to pray to Jesus about this or to the Holy Spirit himself. Jesus presented prayer as a child-to-Father activity (vv. 11-13). Even Jesus himself would later “pray the Father” to give the Holy Spirit to the disciples (John 14:16). But someone may counter by saying, “Jesus also promised to send the Spirit (John 15:26). Why then would it be wrong to ask him to fulfill his promise?” The answer is simple: Jesus did not authorize it. Rather, he said to ask the Father (Luke 11:13).

In a second and third parable on prayer Jesus said that it is “God” to whom his people cry (Luke 18:7, 13). On another occasion Jesus told his disciples to pray to “the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Matt. 9:38). Those disciples understood this and shortly after Pentecost prayed to “God” that they might speak the word with boldness in the face of threats (Acts 4:24-30). This prayer to the Father referred to the Holy Spirit (v. 25) and to “Your holy servant Jesus” (vv. 27, 30), both in the third person, so we know exactly who “God” refers to. Likewise, when Peter was later imprisoned, the church prayed earnestly “to God” for him (Acts 12:5). Except when used as an ascription of deity to the Son, the word “God” in the New Testament, standing

alone and unmodified, always refers to the Father. These prayers demonstrate the disciples' understanding of Jesus' teachings on prayer, and they serve as helpful examples for us today.

May Jesus Be Worshiped?

From several passages in the New Testament we learn that Jesus may properly be worshiped. He was worshiped by the wise men (Matt. 2:2, 11), a leper (Matt. 8:2), the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:6), the ruler Jairus (Matt. 9:18; Mark 5:22; Luke 8:41), a blind man (John 9:38), Jesus' disciples (Matt. 14:33), the Canaanite woman (Matt. 28:9), and the eleven apostles (Matt. 28:17; Luke 24:52). On all of these occasions Jesus accepted their worship.

Moreover, Jesus is worshiped by angels (Heb. 1:6) and, in vision, every living creature (Rev. 5:8-14). These twelve instances are sufficient to show that Jesus is truly a proper object of worship. It is decreed for the Second Coming that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:10-11). This will come true because of God's own wish – "that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father" (John 5:23).

Brethren in general have understood the propriety of worshiping Jesus.²² But the fact that he may be worshiped in *some* way does not mean that he may be worshiped in *every* way. Worship is basically defined by the Hebrew word *shachah*, "to bow down," and the Greek word *proskuneo*, "to kiss towards." Worship may therefore be described as *an act of paying divine honors*, the object of which is deity (or at least thought to be). Even our English word *worship* is derived from "worthship," a position of honor. God's worthship demands my worship.

It is not just God's divine nature, however, that makes it proper for us to worship him but *the fact that God authorizes it*. The scriptures specify, "You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve" (Matt. 4:10). Worship is a matter of *authority*. We may worship God only because he has said that we should. And we may worship only in the manner that he authorizes. Offering animal sacrifices and burning incense were once proper acts of worship. But they are unauthorized today and therefore wrong.

Similarly, we must make a proper distinction between the three persons of the Godhead. Whereas Lockyer affirmed that each of the divine personalities might be worshiped, Gibbs defended praying to Jesus but stoutly denied that we may worship the Holy Spirit. His reason was that "we are not told to offer it *to* the Holy Spirit."²³ Gibbs was mistaken about praying to Jesus, but his principle of the necessity of authority is correct. It is not the Holy Spirit but Jesus who is to be honored as "Lord of lords and King of kings" (Rev. 17:14). And it is not the Holy Spirit but Jesus whom we worship in the memorial of the Lord's Supper, for Jesus said, "This do in remembrance of *me*" (1 Cor. 11:24). Likewise, it is not Jesus or the Holy Spirit who is to be addressed in prayer but the one who is specified – "our Father." That privilege belongs to him alone.

Yes, Jesus may be worshiped, but there is no indication that he may be addressed in prayer. We can learn a lesson from the mistake of Salome who, after worshiping Jesus (Matt. 20:20), made a certain request (v. 21). Jesus answered that it is "not Mine to give," specifying "My Father" as the giver (v. 23). While Jesus did fulfill other requests, only

God the Father could fulfill this one. This does not lessen the importance of Jesus and the Holy Spirit, or subordinate their deity in any way, but it does observe the scriptural distinction between their roles. The lesson we can learn from this is that the roles of the three persons of the Godhead are not identical. We learn from New Testament scripture in general that it is the Father's role to be addressed in prayer.

Jesus' Unique Name

When Jesus came on this earthly scene, the one special contribution that he made to the practice of prayer was the use of his own name. He waited until the very end of his life's work – the night of his betrayal – to reveal this new truth. He first brought it up in John 14:13-14, saying, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do." As one commentator remarked, "the prayer is thought of as addressed to the Father; but the answer . . . is thought of as coming from the Son."²⁴ Jesus further said that "whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (John 15:16). He also added, "Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive" (John 16:24).

Jesus saves "to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25; cf. Rom. 8:34; 1 John 2:1). But this does not mean that our prayers go first to Jesus and that he takes them on to the Father. We have direct access to God through the death of his Son. Now we have "boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19). There we speak to God Himself. It is because of Jesus' priesthood that we may "come boldly to the throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16). Notice these words from our Lord: "In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from God" (John 16:26-27).

The intercessory role of Jesus does not in itself exclude praying also to Jesus directly. The point here is that it does not *require* it as some have thought. However, one must have authority for what he does (Col. 3:17). Specifying that we should pray to the Father *does* exclude praying to Jesus if no authority for it can be found elsewhere for so doing. We have to look further at the teachings of the entire New Testament and then draw our conclusion. However, even before we reach that point, there is a passage we will look at next that may serve as a precursor of what we are going to find.

During the earthly life of Jesus the apostles were accustomed to going to him directly for their every need. Now Jesus tells them that he is going to die and be raised again (John 16:20-22) and that "in that day [after his resurrection – vv. 25-26] you will ask *Me* nothing" (v. 23, NKJV). He emphasized the word "Me." Then he added, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you."²⁵ Barnes, who believed that prayers could be addressed to Jesus, nevertheless gave the following interpretation of this verse: "He now tells them that henceforward their requests were to be made to God in his name. . . . Their requests were not to be made to *him*, but to the *Father*" (emphasis his).²⁶

Some have been less certain that this is what Jesus meant. One brother conjectured that Jesus may have meant that they would ask him nothing on the day of his death, or possibly between his death and his resurrection. Another supposed that Jesus meant that after his resurrection the disciples would have no need to ask him for any clarifications.

They would finally understand what he had been trying to tell them in this very discourse (vv. 17-18). They would ask him nothing because their questions would all be answered. However, if that is the meaning of verse 23, they would not need to wait until the resurrection. Just six verses further down in this very discussion, the disciples proclaim: “See, now you are speaking plainly.” And in the next verse they say, “Now we are sure that You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You.”

It is true that after the resurrection the disciples would have many questions answered because Jesus would open their minds and their understanding (Luke 24:45) and the Holy Spirit would enlighten them (John 16:13). But it is doubtful that this can be the meaning of John 16:23. Notice that Jesus did not say they would have nothing to ask. He simply said they would not ask *him*. Instead, they would ask *the Father*. The Greek verb *erotao* may mean either to request or to ask questions. The latter possibility was given some credibility by the rendering of John 16:23 in the ASV: “ye shall ask me no question.” The RSV followed suit. However, the second edition of the RSV went back to the other meaning (as in the KJV and others) or left it in the ambiguous middle: “you shall ask nothing of me.”

It really matters little which meaning of “ask” should be understood here. The apostles were definitely going to ask for information (Acts 1:24-25) as well as to ask for blessings and help (Acts 4:29). The question is: Whom were they going to ask? Jesus made the answer plain in John 16:23, and the examples in the rest of the New Testament bear it out. Donald Guthrie gave this comment: “In any case questions will not then be put to Jesus, but to the Father in his name. This reference to prayer is important in view of Jesus’ departure and special attention is drawn to it by the formula, *Truly, truly*.”²⁷

We may be certain that Jesus’ statement about “ask me nothing” in John 16:23 refers to prayer for two reasons: (1) The rest of the verse and continuing on through verse 24 clearly reveals it by way of contrast with prayer to the Father. (2) Jesus’ further statement about it in verse 26 makes it plain when he says that he will not pray the Father for them. One of the main points in verses 16-28 is that after Jesus leaves earth for the unseen realm of heaven, the disciples’ requests are to go to the Father. We may also be certain that the apostles and the early church understood Jesus’ instructions, for the entire New Testament concurs with the words of James who told his readers to “ask of God” (Jas. 1:5). Near the end of the first century, John saw that “the prayers of all the saints” were “upon the golden altar which was before the throne” and that these prayers “went up before God” (Rev. 8:3-4).

PASSAGES OFTEN USED TO JUSTIFY PRAYING TO JESUS

In spite of the clear teaching of the New Testament on this subject, many insist on praying to Jesus (or at least insist that we *may*). Some of their reasons are simply emotional arguments or wishful thinking, and some are based on certain passages that they feel would justify such prayers. As we examine these passages, let us remember that New Testament writers always use the word “God” (standing alone and unqualified) to refer to the Father.

A Quotation From Jesus?

John 14:14, as given in some translations (NIV, NASB, TEV, Phillips, Weymouth), has Jesus saying, “ask *me*” in connection with prayer, and some have therefore taken it to be a proof text for praying to Jesus. *The Pulpit Commentary* says that this word *me*, found in the “peculiarity” of the text of the English Revised Version of 1881, provides “special emphasis on Christ’s own power and willingness to receive and answer prayer.”²⁷ Hendriksen affirmed that “the disciples are told that they must not only pray *in the name of* Christ but *to Christ*.”²⁸ Robertson, admitting that the word *me* “seems awkward,” said, “If it is genuine, as seems likely, here is direct prayer to Jesus...”²⁹

Granted, the word “me” is found in this verse in certain Greek manuscripts and ancient versions. And because of the fact that the UBS and Nestle/Aland Greek New Testaments have included this word in the text (though they give ample references to the manuscripts and versions that do not include it), some have assumed that this variant just has to be genuine. However, this reading has been rejected by most translations, including the KJV, NKJV, ASV, and even the RSV (both first and second editions) and NEB. If it is a clearly valid reading, why did these monumental versions leave it out? And why did the American revisers of 1901 remove it from the text where the English revisers had put it in? The answer is that it has historically been regarded as an unwarranted insertion, and the inclusion of the word results in the seeming absurdity of praying *to Jesus in Jesus’ name*.

We approach the Father in Jesus’ name in order to gain his hearing. Just as a friend may say, “Tell them I sent you,” so also Jesus says to tell God that he sent us to the throne of grace. We petition the Father not on our own merits but on the merits of his beloved Son. The Father hears us for Jesus’ sake. The name of the one grants us an audience with the other. This is the very point that Jesus made when he gave this legacy of using his name to the disciples on that betrayal night – that if we use his name, God will give (John 15:16; 16:23-24).

The bottom line is this: There is no doubt that Jesus instructed his disciples, “ask *the Father* in My name.” There is serious doubt that Jesus instructed them, “ask *Me* in My name.” If the only statement that indicates we should pray to Jesus is this one disputed text, it is not a very reassuring thing to depend on for our practice. Over and over and over again Jesus directed his disciples to pray to the Father. If he wanted us to pray to him too, surely there would be one clear statement saying so – either from Jesus or an inspired writer. But as we will see, there is not. Would anyone seriously suggest that we throw caution to the winds and launch out on nothing more than a textual variant that cannot be proven to be genuine for doing something that is authorized nowhere else?

Incidents in Acts

Several incidents in the book of Acts have been cited in order to justify praying to Jesus.

Acts 1:24-25 is thought by some to be an example of prayer to Jesus. Since Jesus had personally selected the original apostles (v. 2), and since the disciples are now praying and asking the “Lord” which man he has chosen to replace Judas in the

apostleship, some assume that the “Lord” to whom the prayer is addressed is Jesus. But was not God also involved in such choices and, in fact, the ultimate decision maker? Before Jesus selected the original twelve he prayed all night to the Father (Luke 6:12-13). So why wouldn’t his disciples also pray to God about a replacement?

In prayer to the Father on his betrayal night, Jesus spoke of the apostles as “the men whom You have given Me” (John 17:6; cf. vv. 9, 24). And later, Peter referred to those apostles as “chosen . . . by God” (Acts 10:41). Ananias said that God (as distinct from Jesus “the Righteous One”) appointed Paul (Acts 22:14). And Paul himself said that his apostleship was “through the will of God” (Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; etc.) and according to God’s command (Tit. 1:3) as well as through Jesus (Gal. 1:1).

The word “Lord” often refers to Jesus, but it is also used of the Father. Such is the case in the prayer of Acts 4:24-30, so why not here in Acts 1:24-25 also? Further, this prayer addresses (literally) the “heart-knower.” It is true that Jesus, even on earth, knew the hearts and thoughts of men (Luke 6:8; John 2:24-25; 6:64) and still does (Rev. 2:23). But the Father is the divine person who would more likely be addressed as the “heart-knower” (see 1 Kgs. 8:39; Luke 16:15). This compound word is used only one other time in the New Testament (again by Peter) where it plainly refers to God (Acts 15:8).

There is therefore nothing in this passage to prove that it was a prayer to Jesus. Would any serious Christian want to rely on mere conjecture to authorize a practice?

Acts 9:13-17. This passage is used to defend praying to Jesus by saying that Ananias did so, but the claim is not true. It was not a prayer at all but a vision (vv. 10-12) where two-way communication took place. Ananias compared it to Jesus’ appearance to Paul on the Damascus Road (v. 17). Can we base our prayers on extraordinary experiences with heavenly beings such as those of Abraham (Gen. 18) or Lot (Gen. 19) or Gideon (Jud. 6) or Manoah (Jud. 13) or Mary? (Luke 1). Like Ananias, Zacharias also had a supernatural visitation (Luke 1:8-20), and it too was called a “vision” (v. 22). But Zacharias’ conversation was with “an angel of the Lord” (v. 11) whose name is Gabriel (v. 19). Does this authorize us to pray to Gabriel? If Ananias’ supernatural experience proves we may pray to Jesus, why wouldn’t these others prove we may pray to angels?

Someone may reply that the reason we would not be allowed to pray to angels is that prayer is a form of worship, and that we are forbidden to worship angels (19:10; 22:8-9). But this begs the question. Prayer is not necessarily worship. The Catholics and Orthodox pray to departed “saints,” but they do not conceive of it as worship. Zacharias asked the angel a question (Luke 1:18), but he did not worship him.

Angels seem to be witnesses of earthly affairs (1 Cor. 11:10) and are “ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation” (Heb. 1:14). If we agree not to worship them, may we follow the example of Zacharias and communicate with angels? The answer is no, for the simple reason that we have no authority to do so. And may we follow the example of Ananias and communicate with Jesus? If it is prayer rather than praise, I believe the answer to be no, for the same reason.

Acts 22:17-21. This scripture has been thought to justify praying to Jesus. But notice what it says: Paul “prayed” and “fell into a trance” and saw Jesus. The passage does not say that Paul prayed to Jesus. Does the mere fact of Jesus’ appearance to Paul prove that he did? On another occasion, Peter was “praying” (Acts 11:5), “fell into a trance” (10:10) and saw four-footed beasts, creeping things and birds (v. 12). If the first

case shows that Paul was praying to Jesus, does this case demonstrate that Peter was praying to animals? The question may sound absurd, but it serves to make the answer obvious: The fact that Jesus appeared to Paul during the prayer does not prove that Paul had been praying to Jesus.

Cornelius was keeping the ninth hour of prayer when suddenly a man in bright apparel stood before him and said, “Cornelius, your prayer is heard” (Acts 10:30-31). That “man” was an angel (v. 3). This is similar to Daniel who, while “speaking in prayer,” suddenly had a visit from “the man Gabriel” who actually was an angel (Dan. 9:21). Had Daniel and Cornelius been praying to the angels? No, Daniel said, “I prayed to the Lord my God” (Dan. 9:4) and Cornelius “prayed to God always” (Acts 10:2). If the appearance of *angels* in these instances does not prove Daniel and Cornelius were praying to those angels, neither does the appearance of *Jesus* prove Paul was praying to Jesus.

The “Examples” of Paul, Stephen and John

Several utterances from Paul, Stephen and John are thought by some to furnish us examples of praying to Jesus.

1 Corinthians 16:22 – in particular, the last word – *maranatha*, is considered by many to be the New Testament’s shortest prayer, a prayer to Jesus to come. While certain ones have dogmatized to this effect in Bible marginal notes, Bible dictionaries, commentaries, etc., it must be pointed out that New Testament scholars are not at all agreed about his word’s form and meaning or its connection to the preceding thoughts in this context.

The word is a Greek transliteration of an expression in Aramaic, the spoken language of Palestine in the first century. *Maran* means “our Lord,” and *atha* is a form of the verb “to come.” The question is whether it means our Lord: (1) *has come* in the incarnation, (2) *has come* in his spiritual presence now, (3) *comes* soon, or is at hand, (4) *will come* someday, or (5) is urged, *come!* The early Greek and Latin expositors agreed that it is stated in the past tense – “has come.” It was thus rendered in the ancient Syriac Version – the eastern dialect of Aramaic – and also in those Greek manuscripts that had accents and punctuation. Robert Young, in his famous *Analytical Concordance* calls it “an emphatic assertion . . . meaning ‘Our Lord has come’ (or ‘will come’).”³⁰ And George Lamsa, in his renowned translation from the Aramaic, has it rendered: “Maran-atha, that is to say, Our Lord has come.”³¹

Down through the centuries the great majority of interpreters have concurred that the word is to be understood in one of those first four ways. It has only been in modern times and among a relatively few Bible students that the expression has been interpreted as in case number five – a prayer to Jesus. How precarious it is to base one’s religious practice on such an unlikely interpretation!

Acts 7:59 is often referred to as evidence that we may pray to Jesus. But let us remember that Stephen was a man who, after receiving the laying-on of the apostles’ hands, was “full of faith and power” and “did great wonders and signs among the people” (Acts 6:8). Not only that, but he spoke by the Holy Spirit (v. 10). This means that he was an inspired man. In Acts 7 Stephen delivered a message that surely was through that gift of inspiration, since his audience “saw his face as the face of an angel” (Acts 6:15). At

the end of the speech, Stephen, “being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:55).

There is not a shred of evidence to indicate that the Spirit left him or that the vision of Jesus faded as they rushed upon him, stoned him, and the dying Stephen entreated, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” No one has ever doubted that this inspired man had every right to make this appeal to Jesus who appeared to him in this heavenly vision. But many have doubted that we have the right in uninspired and ordinary circumstances to do the same thing. To conclude otherwise is bold presumption without any divine authority in back of it. Whenever the time comes that Jesus makes a personal appearance to us, that will be the time for us to do as Stephen did. Meanwhile, we are told to rely on the written word as our guide.

Revelation 22:20, a passage similar to Acts 7:59, is also appealed to in support of praying to Jesus. Here John, at the end of the book of Revelation, says, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” But let’s go back to the beginning. John was “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” (Rev. 1:10), and throughout the events of the book he received divine revelations. If his request of the Lord to come authorizes us to pray to Jesus, do his requests made to other heavenly beings in Revelation authorize us to pray to them too? If not, why not?

Here are further questions: Was John praying when he had a vision of the twenty-four elders and spoke with one of them? (7:13-14). And was he praying as he asked the strong angel for the little book? (10:8-9). If John’s statement to Jesus while he was “in the spirit” was a prayer in the ordinary sense of the word, it would seem that these other statements were prayers too. And if John’s extraordinary circumstances serve as an example for us, we may therefore pray both to elders and angels. If not, why not?

Someone may reply by saying that John did not have an attitude of worship toward those heavenly elders or angels. This is not quite true, for he started to worship the angel and was forbidden (Rev. 19:10; 22:9). But this correction did not restrict him from communicating with the angel or with one of those elders. If we forego worshipping them, does John’s example authorize us to pray to angels? No, and again for the simple reason that we have no authority. We cannot rely on John’s supernatural experiences as an example for our natural prayers any more than we can rely on the rich man of Luke 16 who made a request of Abraham after Abraham was dead, saying, “I pray you therefore, father...” (v. 27).

In the case of John, remember that not only angels and elders but also Jesus appeared to him right at the outset of the events of the book (Rev. 1). At the end of the book, Jesus spoke again and told John, “Surely I am coming quickly” (Rev. 22:20). It was in response to this statement from the Lord that John then replied, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” When Jesus finally appears and speaks to us, we will be allowed to speak too (Matt. 25:37-39). Meanwhile, this statement can in no way serve as a pattern for our practice today.

Passages From John and Paul

Various passages from the New Testament letters have been cited as referring to prayers to Jesus.

1 John 5:13-15 is sometimes appealed to by saying that since it is the Son of God who is mentioned in verse 13, it must also be the Son toward whom we have “boldness” in prayer and who “hears us” (v. 14) so that our petitions may be “asked of Him” (v. 15). If this is so, the ASV, NASB and RSV translators (among others) made a mistake by inserting the word “God” into verse 16 to clarify the meaning, for the same divine person is referred to there. The NIV even put “God” into verse 14 as the one to whom the prayers are made. Why? It is not because the word is there in some Greek manuscripts but because the context indicates that God is the object.

It is God (1 John 1:5) who specifically hears our confession and forgives our sins (v. 9) rather than “Jesus Christ His Son” (v. 7). John identified the boldness we have in prayer as “confidence toward God” (1 John 3:21). And “whatever we ask we receive from Him” because we “believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ” (vv. 22-23). This speaks of going in prayer to *God the Father*, and so does the similar passage of 1 John 5:14-16. It is God who gives us eternal life through Jesus (v. 11) and who continues to give life as prayers are offered to him (vv. 15-16).

John often uses a pronoun to refer to a remote antecedent, someone other than the last person mentioned. Notice these instances of “him” (end of 2:5; 3:1) and “he” (2:25; 3:3, 5; 4:17), all of which refer back to Jesus rather than to the immediate antecedent (God). By the same token, “him” (1 John 5:14) refers back to “God,” the one whose action was being discussed (v. 11) and toward whom we have boldness in prayer, as already discussed. It is only faulty exegesis that leads one to think that this passage speaks of praying to Jesus. The context of the whole New Testament, including this passage, is that God is the recipient of prayers.

Romans 10:12-13 has also been mentioned as “one of the strongest passages in favour of addressing prayer to Christ.”³² The argument is that since Jesus is “Lord” in this context (v. 9), one may therefore “call upon him” by praying to Him. This is just one step short of the typical faith-only position that the confession of verses 9-10 is a prayer to Jesus for salvation. Notice that verse 13 promises that whoever calls on the name of the Lord “shall be saved.” If this passage authorizes prayer to Jesus, then it promises *salvation* as a result of that prayer. But neither premise is true.

To call on the name of the Lord (Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21; 9:14) or on “the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:2) simply means to act in dependence on his word. Vine says, “To call upon the Name of the Lord is to bow to His authority.”³³ Allen describes it as one’s initial obedience to the gospel and his continuing obedience as a Christian.³⁴ For example, one calls on the name of the Lord by being baptized (Acts 22:16) because that action is an “appeal” (NASB) or “answer” (KJV) of a good conscience toward God (1 Pet. 3:21). Here in Romans 10, confession (in connection with belief and other acts of obedience) is the call (vv. 9-13). As Lenski remarks, “calling on the Lord’s name is a confessional act.”³⁵ When the expression is used in reference to Jesus, “it is a recognition of him as God’s presence, as Son and Messiah.”³⁶

Once again proof fails for finding a prayer to Jesus. This tenth chapter of Romans specifies “prayer to God” (v. 1), and “God” is the one who raised Jesus from the dead (v. 9).

2 Corinthians 12:8-9 is probably the most oft-used text to defend the practice of praying to Jesus. It would seem, though, that one would be extremely hesitant to use the

earth-to-heaven conversations of an inspired man as any kind of example for us today. The F.C. Cook commentary identifies this as “a special communication belonging to the same class with the revelations of which he has been speaking and a part of one of them.”³⁷ But further, I am convinced that the passage does not say what some think it does.

The argument runs like this: (1) Paul prayed to “the Lord.” (2) He answered, promising “My” grace and “My” strength or power to Paul. (3) Since Paul said it was “the power of Christ” that would rest upon him, the “Lord” to whom he prayed must have been Jesus. It is worthy of notation that many Greek manuscripts do not contain the word *mou* (“my”) here in reference to the word power or strength, but rather say, “*the* power is perfected in weakness.” Therefore, it is entirely possible that in verse 9 Paul represents the Father promising Christ’s power. So no ironclad argument can be made on the basis of this word. The *Expositor’s Greek Testament* says that it should be omitted.

In the final analysis, though, it really makes no difference whether the Lord said “my” power or not. The inclusion of this word will not demonstrate that it was Jesus speaking, for God’s power and Christ’s may be mentioned interchangeably because of being the same divine power in essence. Notice that Paul said in this chapter that the power of *Christ* would rest upon him, but then in the next chapter he said that we would live with Christ “through the power of *God*” (13:4). Divine comfort in the face of affliction is actually “by God” and “through Christ” (1:4-5), so the power is from both. Therefore, it would be perfectly natural for the Father to promise “My power” to Paul, and for Paul to turn right around and refer to it as “the power of Christ.”

There is yet another element to notice in this passage, though. What Paul said here was in the context of “visions and revelations” (v. 1). And Paul is still speaking of those revelations in verse 7 – immediately before he mentions his plea to the Lord. What Paul describes here may very well have been a revelatory conversation between Jesus and Paul such as took place on the Damascus Road (Acts 9, 22, 26), in which Paul received information. And just as Paul asked Jesus on that occasion who he was and what he wanted him to do, so here he may be asking Jesus to remove the thorn that had just been placed upon him by Satan’s messenger as he was receiving the revelation. In this case, it is purely a revelation experience that Paul portrays in this entire section and unlike any event that we experience today.

Both of the above scenarios are possible, and therefore this passage cannot be used to demonstrate a prayer to Jesus. Notice that in the next chapter when Paul was discussing ordinary Christian practice, he clearly said, “I [or we] pray to God” (13:7). And who is that? Could Paul’s reference possibly include Jesus? No, because over and over and over again, in an entirely consistent way, Paul mentions “God” to mean the Father (see 1 Cor. 6:14; 8:6; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 4:4-5).

It cannot be successfully disputed that praying to the Father is ordinary Christian prayer. A Christian should never go to an extraordinary event to prove an ordinary practice. And a Christian should likewise never use a speculative interpretation as authority for his actions.

1 Timothy 1:12 is thought to be a prayer to Jesus since Paul said (as represented in the KJV), “I thank Christ Jesus our Lord.” Literally, this is not what Paul actually said but rather, “I have thanks” or “gratitude.” The expression speaks of Paul’s heart, of his

being “thankful” (Thayer, Vine) or “grateful” (Arndt-Gingrich). Even the KJV rendered the identical expression in Hebrews 12:28 as “have grace,” meaning “be thankful” (Thayer, Arndt-Gingrich). The renowned Greek scholar A.T. Robertson rendered this expression both in Hebrews 12:28 and Luke 17:9 as having “gratitude.”³⁹

Therefore, this expression in 1 Timothy 1:12 does not say “I give thanks” but rather “I have thanks.” In checking the three interlinear Greek New Testaments that I normally consult in my library, two of them render the Greek phrase *echo charin* as “I have thanks” and the third one as “I have gratitude.” Even the NRSV recognized the inaccuracy of the older RSV here and rendered the phrase, “I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord.” This expression describes inner gratitude rather than the overt act of offering thanks in prayer.

On the other hand, “thanksgiving” is rendered “to God” (1 Ths. 3:9). Jesus is Lord, but we give God our thanks (Rom. 14:6-9). Even Kittel’s *TNDT* says, “In prayer distinction is made between God and Jesus” and “the prayer of thanksgiving is reserved for God. Christ is the mediator of this, not the recipient.”³⁸ Paul said we are to give thanks “to *God the Father* through Him” (Col. 3:17) or “to *God the Father* in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20).

Over and over in the New Testament we read of giving thanks (*eucharisteo*) to God, but never once to the glorified Jesus. And therefore we are again without a proof text for offering prayers to Jesus.

1 Timothy 2:5 is also thought to imply that we might pray to Jesus since he is our “Mediator” who is “between God and men.” But let us understand what this means. Jesus mediated the New Covenant to us by his death (Heb. 9:15) and thus paved the way for us to enter into the holy place of God Himself (Heb. 10:19) and directly approach God’s throne of grace (Heb. 4:16). Our Lord’s mediatorial role does not require us to speak to Jesus and then ask him to carry the prayers on to God. Our Mediator, Intercessor, Advocate and High Priest said, “Pray to your Father” (Matt. 6:6, 9; Luke 11:2). And those early Christians understood this, for when they prayed they bowed their knees “to the Father” (Eph. 3:14) and “lifted up their voice to God” (Acts 4:24). In the inspired history book of Acts we find that it was God to whom they always prayed (Acts 12:5; 16:25; 27:35).

The Old Covenant also had a mediator (Gal. 3:19) and a high priest (Heb. 5:1-4), but Jews could pray to neither one. We do not have an inherent right to pray to our Mediator any more than they could pray to theirs. They were instructed to pray to God the Father, and so are we. One should no more pray to Jesus as Mediator or Intercessor than he should pray to the Holy Spirit who specifically intercedes for us in prayer (Rom. 8:26-27) unless there is definite authority for doing so. And if there is, where is it?

CONCLUSION

Our instructions about how to pray are very clear in the New Testament. Unless there is some clear text that says we may, Christians should neither practice nor advocate praying to Jesus. To a conscientious Christian, this will necessitate screening some songs that are commonly in our hymnbooks. For example, the song *Just a Little Talk With Jesus* does not represent scriptural views. This song does not speak of praying *through* Jesus but rather *to* Jesus. It not only advocates prayer to Jesus but also states that the prayer

alone accomplishes salvation. How utterly wrong it is to encourage people to “have a little talk with Jesus” and “go to Him in prayer,” saying that “just a little talk with Jesus made me whole.” And unless one can justify a liberal amount of poetic license, *I Must Tell Jesus* and *Tell It to Jesus Alone* are likewise misleading.

Christians are to worship the Son (Luke 24:52) even as do the angels (Heb. 1:6), and this is expressed in praise (Rev. 5:9-14). Though the scene in this latter passage takes place in heaven, it is specifically stated that creatures “on the earth” are to give praise to Jesus. Therefore, we Christians offer him praise in many of our songs. We even have a praise song called *Worthy Art Thou* that is taken from this very passage. But there is a difference between praise and prayer. One may sing to “the Lord” Jesus (Eph. 5:19), but he must “always” give thanks (pray) “to God the Father” (v. 20). The Bible’s admonition is that “in *everything* by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto *God*” (Phil. 4:6). And this is the Father as distinct from “Christ Jesus” (v. 7).

Some would point out that the New Testament nowhere forbids praying to Jesus. But neither does it forbid instrumental music in worship and many other innovations. The Bible does not have to forbid something in order for it to be wrong. In the area of prayer, as in all other Bible matters, let us practice what we preach and let us preach what the New Testament teaches. If it teaches us to pray to Jesus, then let us immediately begin doing so and let us repent of having neglected it in the past. But in light of the above study, and in view of a lack of evidence to the contrary, it is my conviction that the Bible does *not* teach that Christians may pray to Jesus.

In the absence of a specific passage for praying to Jesus, some have resorted to reason. It just seems reasonable to them that Christians could pray to their Savior, their divine Friend, and such reasoning alone makes them feel justified in doing it. But the pitfall to this is that what seems reasonable to one person is not reasonable to the next. If conclusions based on subjective feelings are how we are to decide what is proper to do in worship, everyone will become a law unto himself and do what is right in his own eyes. It seems reasonable to Mormons to have water for the Lord’s Supper instead of grape juice because, after all, grape juice is difficult or impossible to find in some places. It seems reasonable to Catholics to pray to Mary. In fact, this is exactly how they argue their case for it, by appealing to the reasonableness of it.

Apparently some in the Lord’s church are likewise basing prayer to Jesus on their reasoning alone. For example, some have said that it seems reasonable that we should pray to Jesus in order to have a more intimate relationship with him. By not praying to him, they think that we exclude him from being at the center of our spiritual lives. But surely no one cautions against praying to Jesus in order to cause people to have a less intimate relationship with him. Why would anyone adopt such a purpose as that? The reason I write and preach against praying to Jesus is to get people to have a *more* intimate relationship with him by doing what he says. This is what Jesus himself indicated would be the result when he said, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him” (John 14:23). This intimate relationship is predicated on keeping his word. And since Jesus directed his disciples to pray to the Father, that is the word I urge people to keep.

Since there is no clear biblical evidence that Christians may pray to Jesus, I believe that doing so is unauthorized and therefore wrong. However, I am not going to

pronounce an eternal verdict and say that one will be condemned for so doing. I believe it is entirely possible that in some cases, at least, people may be forgiven of this and other errors of ignorance and still be saved. The Lord is the Judge of all, and I am perfectly content to leave the judging with him.

ENDNOTES

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2. James S. Stewart, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ* (Abingdon, n.d.), 105.
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4. Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak* (Sweet, 1971), 143-144.
5. Cited by E.R. Bernard, "Prayer," *A Dictionary of the Bible*, James Hastings, ed. (T. & T. Clark, 1906), IV, 44.
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11. James G.S.S. Thompson, "Prayer," *The New Bible Dictionary* (Inter-Varsity, 1962), 1021.
12. Alfred P. Gibbs, *Worship* (Walterick, n.d.), 248-279.
13. Herbert Lockyer, *All the Prayers of the Bible* (Zondervan, 1964), 174.
14. Alexander Campbell, "Prayer – No. 1," *The Millennial Harbinger* (Old Paths, n.d.), II, 474.
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17. C.R. Nichol, "Prayers," *The Lord's Supper, Prayers, Thanksgivings*, 88.
18. James Burton Coffman, *Commentary on John* (Firm Foundation, 1974), 368.
19. Frank Pack, *The Gospel According to John, Part II* (Sweet, 1977), 62.
20. Personal letter to the author, dated October 5, 1977.
21. Ray Hawk, "Let Us Have a Little Talk With Jesus," *The World Evangelist* (July, 1981), 10.
22. See, for example, the chapter by M.P. Hayden, "The worshiping of Jesus," *New Testament Christianity*, Z.T. Sweeney, ed. (privately published, 1923), I, 378-390.
23. Gibbs, *Worship*, 175.
24. H.W. Watkins, "The Gospel According to John," *New Testament Commentary*, Charles John Ellicott, ed. (Cassell & Co., 1839), I, 506.
25. The Textus Receptus and the King James Version have "in my name" connected with the asking rather than the giving. But it is all the same. What is asked in the name of Jesus is also received in his name.

26. Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament* (Kregel, 1980), 344.
27. [Donald Guthrie, "John," *The New Bible Commentary: Revised* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 961.
28. H.R. Reynolds, "The Gospel of St. John," *The Pulpit Commentary*, H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, eds. (Eerdmans, 1958), vol. 17, part 2, 225.
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30. Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Baker, 1932), V, 252.
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