

THE LORD'S PRAYER

LUKE 11:2-4	MATTHEW 6:9-13
'Father, hallowed be Your name.	'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.	'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.
'Give us each day our daily bread.	'Give us this day our daily bread.
'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.	'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation.'"	'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
	For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

INTRODUCTION

Jesus gives His disciples a model. But it is only a model: "This is how [not what] you should pray." Last week we noted a number of things about this prayer.

1. It uses phrases found in other Jewish prayers which would have been familiar to the disciples of Jesus
2. That it was practice of Jewish teachers to reduce the many commandments to one or two. The Lord's Prayer seems to be Jesus' synopsis of various Jewish prayers of the time.
3. The "*Thou-petitions*" are synonymous parallelism. They all mean roughly the same thing. "Hallowed be thy name," "Thy kingdom come," and "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven,"
4. The "*Us-petitions*" participate in the tension between the ultimate future and the disciples' present.

GOD ADDRESSED AS FATHER

The fatherhood of God is not a central theme in the Old Testament. Where "father" does occur with respect to God, it is commonly by way of analogy, not direct address ([Deut 32:6](#); [Ps 103:13](#); [Isa 63:16](#); [Mal 2:10](#)).

One can also find occasional references to God as father in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha ([Tobit 13:4](#); [Ecclesiasticus 23:1](#); [51:10](#); [Wisdom 2:16](#); [14:3](#); [Jub 1:24-25, 28](#); [T Levi 18:6](#); [T Judah 24:2](#)--though some of these may be Christian interpolations).

There is only one instance in the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 9:35);

The assorted rabbinic references are relatively rare and few unambiguously antedate Jesus (b. *Taanith* 25b; the fifth and sixth petitions of the *Eighteen Benedictions*).

Against such a background, Jesus' habit of addressing God as his own Father ([Mark 14:36](#)) and teaching his disciples to do the same could only appear familiar and presumptuous to His opponents, while personal and gracious to His followers. Unfortunately, many modern Christians find it very difficult to delight in the privilege of addressing the Sovereign of the universe as "Father" because they have lost the heritage that emphasizes God's transcendence.

Jesus use of *Abba* ("Father" or "my Father"; [Mark 14:36](#); cf. [Matt 11:25](#); [26:39](#), [42](#); [Luke 23:34](#); [John 11:41](#); [12:27](#); [17:1-26](#)) was adopted by early Christians ([Rom 8:15](#); [Gal 4:6](#)); and there is no evidence of anyone before Jesus using this term to address God.

Very striking is Jesus' use of pronouns with "Father." When forgiveness of sins is discussed, Jesus speaks of "*your Father*" ([6:14-15](#)) and excludes Himself. When He speaks of His unique Sonship and authority, he speaks of "*my Father*" (e.g., [Matt 11:27](#)) and excludes others. The "*our Father*" at the beginning of this model prayer is plural but does not include Jesus, since it is part of His instruction regarding what his disciples should pray. This opening designation establishes the kind of God to whom prayer is offered: He is personal (no mere "ground of being") and caring (a Father, not a tyrant or an ogre, but the one who establishes the real nature of fatherhood, cf. [Eph 3:14-15](#))

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

This is more than just a formula of praise. The true significance of this petition is seldom recognized. How can the name of God be "hallowed"? Actually, the sense of the word could be better expressed in English by the term "sanctify." The whole phrase should be translated, 'May your name be sanctified.' Of course, the sanctity of God is a well-known Biblical theme (e.g., [Isaiah 6:3](#)) and seems to be related to God's justice.

Compare [Ezekiel 38:23](#): "*So I will show my greatness and my holiness and make myself known in the eyes of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.*"

Jesus' Hebrew phrase, *yitkadesh* "hallowed" or "be sanctified," is parallel to the Hebrew text of [Ezekiel 38:23](#): *v' hitkadishti* "So I will show . . . my holiness." This verse from [Ezekiel](#) formed the basis for a number of ancient Jewish prayers. The phrase, 'So I will show my greatness and my holiness,' is paralleled by Rabbi [Ezekiel](#)'s blessing which appears in the [Jerusalem Talmud](#). When the much-needed rains came, he would bless the Lord: "May Your name be magnified, sanctified, and exalted, *Our King*, for every drop that you send to us." Here we see the basis for the formulation of the Hebrew expression. It expresses an intense desire: "Grant it that all the world may recognize and sanctify the name of our Father." What did this expression mean to Jesus' Jewish listeners, nearly two thousand years ago? The exact meaning of the word "*sanctify*" was difficult to define in concrete terms, and so the term was sometimes clarified antithetically by its antonym, "*profane*." In fact, this strong contrast already appears in [Ezekiel](#):

"And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the nations, and which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD . . . when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes' ([Ezekiel 36:23](#)).

The name of the Lord can be either sanctified or profaned by the conduct of the people. In fact, because a martyr would frequently cause others to glorify God as a result of his sacrifice, the Hebrew idiom, "*to sanctify the Name*," was often understood as referring to someone who would give his life for his faith.

Early Jewish commentaries on the Scriptures provide insights into how biblical passages were interpreted during the New Testament era. Hence it can be illuminating to read the [Midrash](#) (commentary) on the verse,

"And you shall not profane my holy name, but I will be hallowed among the people of Israel" ([Leviticus 22:32](#)).

Israel's sages interpreted this verse to mean that one must be willing to sacrifice his life for his faith. "One should not understand literally, 'Do not profane,' but rather, 'Sanctify'- and when He said, 'I will be hallowed'- it means deliver yourself over and sanctify my name.'" The focus of this passage is on those who would suffer martyrdom for their righteous way of life and thereby sanctify God's name by their example.

How can God's name be celebrated as holy? Has the deeper significance of these words been fully recognized? Perhaps the true force of this expression in the Disciples' Prayer is more accurately expressed by Jesus' words: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven" ([Matthew 5:16](#)).

THY KINGDOM COME

Probably no other aspect of Jesus' teaching has been so greatly misunderstood as the Kingdom of Heaven. Certainly, no other theme is more essential for understanding Jesus. Unfortunately, most research into the subject fails to embrace all of the various concepts surrounding this all-important theme. Here, it is only possible to deal with materials that are representative of the various approaches to the Kingdom in New Testament times. Today, many Christians wrongly view the Kingdom as meaning either "heaven" or a future monarchy that God will establish. Both of these popular interpretations are remote from Jesus' thought. In the Gospels, the powerful idiom "the Kingdom of Heaven" appears quite frequently on the lips of Jesus and seems to have become a distinct, technical term in his teachings.

"What is the Kingdom of God?" The centrality of "the Kingdom of God" to Jesus' teaching. The concept of the Kingdom of God was something that Jesus and the rabbis of His time had in common.

The Kingdom of God is always associated with the authority of the King.

The term Kingdom of Heaven *mal-KUT sha-MA-yim* was a typical euphemism to avoid unintentionally misusing the Divine Name. The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven are the same.

This connection with God's kingdom and His Name is echoed in the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples, "...hallowed be Your Name, Your Kingdom come..."

When Jesus spoke of those who said "Lord, Lord..." He was thinking of the great confession of faith called the Shema Matt 7:21 / Luke 6:36 [*Deut. 6:4-9*]

"Where is the Kingdom of God?"

Second we saw that the Kingdom is present, near and among us. For Jesus there was a specific point in time (the present) when the kingdom began breaking out upon earth. Jesus is the only Jew of ancient times, known to us, who preached not only that people were on the threshold of the end of time, but that the new age of salvation had already begun - For Jesus, the kingdom of heaven is not only the eschatological (at the end time) rule of God (- which it most certainly is,) but it is also the rule of God that has dawned already, by a divinely willed movement that spreads among people throughout the earth.

This phrase from the Lord's Prayer, therefore, can be reconstructed as *tamlík malkutka*, "*May you continue establishing your kingship....*" It is parallel to the entreaty that follows: "May your will be done...."

So the answer to "Where" is "Anywhere where the Authority of God is recognised and the works of Spirit of God are done."