

Can you Pray to Jesus?

(When quoting scriptures, from the Rotherham Emphasized Bible New Testament, I will substitute the Hebrew words Yahoshua (yeh-ho-shoo'- ah) for Jesus, Yahweh and Elohim for God and the LORD and ruah for pneuma (spirit).)

The majority of Christians, including pastors, are ignorant concerning the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words that have been translated, 'Prayer.' The words supplication and intercession are rarely, if at all, used in their vocabulary. To them, asking is the same as a prayer but as we all know, asking for help from a friend is not praying to them. Most people say, 'prayer,' when they mean, 'supplication;' supplication meaning, "a seeking, asking, entreating, entreaty to God or to man." The question should be restated to say, 'Can you pray to anyone besides YAHWEH?' Can you pray to Mary, St. Christopher etc,? To address the original question, 'Can you Pray to Jesus,' can be answered by studying the usages of the Hebrew word, palah,¹ and the Greek word, proseuchomai.² The question we can ask is, in the New Testament, 'Did anyone proseuchomai to Yahoshua or did he ask anyone to proseuchomai to him?' the answer being, No! We can also ask, 'Did Yahoshua proseuchomai?' which he did and, 'To whom did he proseuchomai to?' which was to his God. The people who pray to Jesus reject the scriptures that state that Yahoshua has a God;³ they have three gods, which is called the Trinity, which allows them to pray to all three gods (God the Father, god the Son and god the Holy Spirit). They also electively forget what a mediator is, even though the scriptures clearly state that, "For there is, one, God, one, mediator also, between God and men,—a man—Christ Yahoshua" (1 Tim. 2:5). Do we pray to a mediator or do we go through a mediator to get to Yahweh? Another truth is, Christ Yahoshua, in this age, is the Head of the Body, the assembly. He is also our Master to whom we bow but he is not our Creator, our God. All these truths must be reconciled together so that there are no contradictions; there is no crossing over holy boundaries. We must always remember, "...that, YAHWEH, he, is God, in the heavens above, and upon the earth beneath,—there is, none, other" (Deu. 4:39).

The Greek word translated, mediator, which is, mesites,⁴ comes from the Greek word, mesos,⁵ which means, middle, in the midst, as translated so in Matthew 18:2, which states, "And, calling near a child, he set it in the midst [mesos] of them." Moses was a mediator, chosen by the Israelites,⁶ between the Israelites and Yahweh. He also mediated between Pharaoh and Yahweh. The High Priest acted as a mediator between Israel and Yahweh, as well as did many prophets (Elijah) and kings (David). Yahoshua is also a mediator, which means, "one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and

¹ 06419 פלל palal paw-lal'

² 4336 προσεύχομαι proseuchomai pros-yoo'-khom-ahce

³ Mt. 12:50, 27:46; John 20:19, Rm. 8:17, 29, 1Cor. 15:24, 2 Cor. 1:3, 11:31; Eph. 1:3, 17; Col. 1:3; Heb. 1:9, 2:11; Rev. 1:6; 3:2, 12 (3 x's)

⁴ 3316 μεσίτης mesites mes-ee'-tace

⁵ 3319 μέσος mesos mes'-os 1) middle 2) the midst 3) in the midst of, amongst

⁶ And they said unto Moses, Speak, thou, with us, and we will hear,—but let not Elohim speak, with us, lest we die. (Ex. 20:19)

friendship, or form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant." As the scriptures state, "Now, a mediator, is not a mediator of one, but, Yahweh, is, one" (Gal. 3:20). Ephesians 2:14-18 expresses Christ mediating by stating, "He, in fact, is our peace—who made both one, and, the enclosing middle-wall, took down, The enmity, in his flesh—the law of commandments in decrees—bringing to nought,—that, the two, he might create in himself, into one man of new mould, making peace. And might fully reconcile them both, in one body, through means of the cross,—slaying the enmity thereby; — And, coming, he announced the glad-message—of peace, unto you, the far off, and peace, unto them that were nigh; Because, through him, we have our introduction—we both—in one ruah (spirit,) unto the Father." We know that Yahweh was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself (2 Cor. 5:19). We know that no one can get to the Father but through (dia) Christ (Jn. 14:6). Yahoshua is the mediator between Yahweh and man (1 Ti. 2:5); a mediator of a new covenant (Heb. 12:24); a high priest, prophet, apostle, the only-begotten Son of Yahweh, who sits at Yahweh's right hand, who has a name above every name. Pharaoh did not pray to Moses but petitioned Moses to pray to Yahweh. Aaron did not pray to Moses but petitioned Moses, who he called lord, to pray to Yahweh that Miriam be healed of her leprosy.⁷ Yahweh did not tell Abimelech to pray to Abraham but to petition Abraham to pray to Yahweh for him.⁸ Praying (palah) is to be done to YAHWEH alone! The creation of the Trinity removes Yahoshua from being the mediator between Yahweh and man by making him God, himself. Then who is our mediator between ourselves and Yahoshua, who is really Yahweh? Foolishness!

The primary Hebrew verb, when in the Hithpael stem, that is translated, pray, is the word, palah (paw-lal'), and it's noun (prayer) is t^ophillah (tef-il-law'). The first usage of both of them together is in 2 Samuel 7:27, which states, "For, thou, O Yahweh of hosts, Elohim of Israel, hast unveiled the ear of thy servant [Solomon], saying—A house, will I build for thee. For this cause, hath thy servant found in his heart, to pray [palah (in the Hithpael stem)] unto thee, this prayer [t^ophillah]. The first two usages of palah are in Genesis 20:7 and 17, which state, "Now, therefore, restore the man's [Abraham] wife, for, a prophet, is he, that he may pray [palah] for thee, and live thou,—But, if thou art not going to restore her, know, that thou, shalt die, thou—and all that are thine...And Abraham prayed [palah] unto Elohim,—and Elohim healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants, so that they bare children." By studying the usages of palah, one will see it is always associated with praying to Yahweh or a pagan god and never to a mediator. (All the usages of palah, in the Hithpael stem, are listed in Appendix A.) Isaiah 44:17 illustrates it's usage with a pagan god, when it states, "And, the residue thereof, Into a GOD [El], he maketh, Into his

⁷ Then said Aaron unto Moses,—Oh my lord, do not, I beseech thee, lay upon us sin, although we have made ourselves foolish, and although we have sinned. Let her not, I beseech thee, remain like the still-born,—which, when it is born of its mother, the half of its flesh is consumed. Then Moses made outcry unto Yahweh, saying,—O GOD, I beseech thee, grant healing, I beseech thee, unto her. (Num. 12:11-13)

⁸ Now, therefore, restore the man's wife, for, a prophet, is he, that he may pray for thee, and live thou,—But, if thou art not going to restore her, know, that thou, shalt die, thou—and all that are thine. And Abraham prayed unto God,—and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants, so that they bare children. (Gen. 20:16-17)

carved image,—Adoreth it, and boweth down, and prayeth [paleh] unto it, And saith, Deliver me, for, my GOD [El], thou art!"

The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew text, uses the Greek verb, proseuchomai (pros-yoo'-khom-ah-ee), for the Hebrew verb, palah. Yahoshua uses proseuchomai in Luke 11:1-2, which states, "Now it came to pass, as He [Yahoshua] was praying [proseuchomai] in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray [proseuchomai], as John also taught his disciples." So He said to them, "When you pray [proseuchomai], say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven." This very simple and clear verse, in itself, answers the question, 'Can you pray to Jesus.' This would have been an opportune time for him to insert his name, but he did not and neither should we. Yahoshua proseuchomai (prayed) to his God and Father, who is our God and Father,⁹ throughout the Gospel of Luke:

Lu 3:21 ¶ Now it came to pass, when one and all the people were immersed, Yahoshua also, having been immersed, and being at prayer, heaven was opened;

Lu 5:16 howbeit, he, was retiring in the deserts, and engaging in prayer.

Lu 6:12 ¶ And it came to pass, in these days, that he went forth into the mountain to pray, and was spending the night in the prayer-house of God.

Lu 9:18 ¶ And, it came to pass, when he was praying in solitude, the disciples, were with him. And he questioned them, saying—Who do the multitudes say that I am?

Lu 9:28 ¶ And it came to pass, after these words, about eight days, taking with him Peter and John and James, he went up into the mountain to pray.

Lu 9:29 And it came to pass, while he was praying, that, the appearance of his face, was changed, and, his clothing, became white, effulgent.

Lu 11:1 ¶ And it came to pass, when he was in a certain place praying, as he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him—Lord! teach us to pray, as, John also, taught his disciples.

Lu 22:41 And, he, was torn from them about a stone's throw; and, bending his knees, he began to pray,

Hebrews 5:6-8 states of Yahoshua, "As also, in a different place, he saith—Thou [Yahoshua], art a priest, age-abidingly, according to the rank of Melchizedek: Who, in the days of his flesh, having offered up, both supplications and entreaties unto him [Yahweh] that was able to save him out of death, with mighty outcries and tears, and been hearkened to by reason of his devoutness, Even though he was a son, yet learned, from what things he suffered, obedience." (A list of verses containing proseuchomaing to the Father are in Appendix B.)

⁹ Yahoshua saith unto her—Be not detaining me, for, not yet, have I ascended unto the Father; but be going unto my disciples, and say unto them—I am ascending unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God. (Jn. 20:17)

Many corrupt Bible translations, such as the NKJV, NIV, NLT etc., translate other unrelated words, pray, when they are not proseuchomai. For example, proseuchomai is never used in the Gospel of John. The word pray or prayer is absent from the Rotherham Bible and Young's Bible, in the Gospel of John but is present in these other corrupted versions, which misleads it's readers. Yahoshua did not pray in the Gospel of John! I bet you did not know that! (For more information on the Gospel of John, read the article, 'The Gospel of John is an Enigma.' Vol. 1 pg. 63)

We now know, according to the scriptures, that people only palahed (prayed) and proseuchomaied (prayed) to Yahweh and Yahweh only. We do not palah to Mary or to Yahoshua. Yahweh is a jealous El, for he says in Exodus 34:14, "For thou shalt not bow thyself down to another El,—For, as for Yahweh, Jealous [qanna' (kan-naw')],¹⁰ is his name, A jealous [qanna] El, he is." Fidelity is what Yahweh demands from his children. Palahing (praying) to Yahoshua or to any one other than Yahweh undermines the very foundation of Yahweh's structure, as recorded in his Word; "...There is one Elohim the Father, of whom are all things, and, we, for him; and one Lord Yahoshua Christ, through whom are all things, and, we, through him" (1 Cor. 8:6). The man-made doctrine of the Trinity has undermined Yahweh's structure, to satan's delight, breaking the first and second commandments,¹¹ directing people to pray to Jesus and the holy spirit. The Roman Catholic rosary has Catholics praying a rotation of one time to the Father and then ten times to Mary, requesting her to pray for them. Mary is asleep (dead) awaiting the awakening (egeiro) of the dead (resurrection), as are all saints who have ceased to breath. People have forsaken Yahweh, a fountain of living water and have hewed them cisterns (man-made doctrines) that are broken cisterns that can hold no water.¹²

Then how are we supposed to interact with our Adon (Lord) and Savior, who is our Head? We talk to him, as did all of his apostles and disciples. We follow our daily orders that he gives us. He being our Head, then His thoughts are our thoughts. Yahweh is his Head, so Yahweh's thoughts are his thoughts.¹³ We ask, (aiteo)¹⁴ and not palah in Yahoshua's name

¹⁰ God is depicted as Israel's husband; he is a jealous God. {#Ex 20:5} Idolatry is spiritual adultery and merits death. Phinehas played the faithful lover by killing a man and his foreign wife, and thus stayed the wrath of divine jealousy. {#Nu 25:11} Joshua repeated the fact that God is a jealous God who would not tolerate idolatry and the people voluntarily placed themselves under God's suzerainty. {#Jos 24:19} Through idolatry Israel incited God to justified wrath, e.g. in the days of Ahab, and God punished them. Ultimately, repeated warnings went unheeded and God gave his people the justice due their spiritual adultery. {#Eze 5:13 Eze 8:3,5 Eze 16:38} The Psalmist identified the jealousy of God as the cause of the exile and he besought his Sovereign to quench his wrath against Israel. {#Ps 79:5} According to promise God rested his jealous wrath against Israel {#Eze 16:42, cf. #De 30} and turned against those who had misused them. {#Eze 36:5-6} So strong is his disposition to vindicate his name {#Eze 39:25} and his people, that all the earth felt his wrath. {#Zep 3:8} Thus it will be seen that the action informed by this intensity may result in ill and perdition and is associated with words denoting wrath {#Nu 25:11 Eze 16:38,42 Eze 36:6 Eze 38:9} and anger {#De 29:19 [H 20]}, and as a consuming force with fire. {#Zep 1:18 Zep 3:8}

¹¹ I, am Yahweh thy Elohim,—who have brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of servants:— Thou shalt not have other gods, besides me. Thou shalt not make to thee an image, or any form, that is in the heavens above,—or that is in the earth beneath... (Ex. 20:2-4)

¹² For, two wicked things, have my people committed,—Me, have they forsaken, a fountain of living water, To hew out for themselves, cisterns, broken cisterns, that cannot hold water. (Jer. 2:13)

¹³ But I wish you to know—that, the head of every husband [aner], is, the Christ, and, the head of a wife [gune], is, the husband [aner]; and, the head of the Christ, is, Yahweh. (1 Cor. 11:3)

and he will do it but only when it is the Father's will.¹⁵ When someone talks to you about prayer or praying to Jesus, ask them what Hebrew word and/or Greek word are they referring to, which will generally end the discussion. People are generally lazy when it comes to doing their homework. This includes pastors and teachers. Let us not follow the blind, lest we fall into a ditch but rather let Yahweh's Word be our guide, which has instructed us to "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer [proseuche] and supplication [deesis], with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to Yahweh [not Jesus] and the peace of Yahweh [not Jesus], which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:6-7). Praying through Christ Jesus or in his name to Yahweh is the proclaimed order!

Appendix A

Palah in Hithpael stem

Ge 20:7 Now, therefore, restore the man's wife, for, a prophet, is he, that he may pray for thee, and live thou,—But, if thou art not going to restore her, know, that thou, shalt die, thou—and all that are thine.

Ge 20:17 And Abraham **prayed unto God**,—and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maid-servants, so that they bare children.

Nu 11:2 Then did the people make outcry unto Moses,—and Moses **prayed unto Yahweh**, and the fire sank down.

Nu 21:7 Then came the people of Israel unto Moses, and said—We have sinned, in that we spake against Yahweh and against thee, **Pray thou unto Yahweh**, that he may take from us the serpent. So Moses prayed for the people.

De 9:20 And, with Aaron, did Yahweh show himself exceedingly angry, to destroy him,—so I prostrated myself, even in behalf of Aaron, at that time.

De 9:26 Therefore I **prostrated myself unto Yahweh**, and said, My Lord Yahweh! Do not destroy thy people, even thine inheritance, which thou hast redeemed in thy greatness,—which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a firm hand.

1Sa 1:10 and, she being in bitterness of soul, **prayed unto Yahweh**, and, wept sore.

¹⁴ 154 αἰτέω aiteo ahee-teh'-o 1) to ask, beg, call for, crave, desire, require

Joh 14:13 And because, whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, the same, will I do, that, the Father, may be glorified, in the Son:

Joh 14:14 If anything ye shall ask [[me]] in my name, the same, will I do.

Joh 15:16 Not, ye, chose, me, but, I, chose you, and placed you, that ye should go your way and bear, fruit,—and, your fruit, should abide: that, whatsoever ye should ask the Father in my name, he might give unto you.

Joh 16:23 And, in that day, shall ye request me, nothing:—Verily, verily, I say unto you—Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, He will give you, in my name.

Joh 16:26 In that day, In my name, shall ye ask:—and I say not that, I, will request the Father for you;

¹⁵ Joh 6:38 ...Not that I should be doing my own will, but the will of him that sent me.

1Sa 2:1 ¶ Then prayed Hannah, and said, My heart hath leaped for joy in Yahweh, My horn is exalted in Yahweh, My mouth is opened wide, over my foes, Because I rejoice in thy salvation.

1Sa 2:25 If one man sin against another, God will interpose, but, if, against Yahweh, a man sin, who will intercede, for him? But they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, for Yahweh was pleased to put them to death.

1Sa 7:5 And Samuel said, Gather all Israel unto Mizpah,—that I may pray for you, unto Yahweh.

1Sa 8:6 But the thing was displeasing in the eyes of Samuel, when they said, Give unto us a king to judge us. So Samuel prayed unto Yahweh.

1Ki 8:29 that thine eye may be opened toward this house, night and day, toward the place of which thou hast said, My Name shall be, there; hearkening unto the prayer which thy servant shall offer toward this place.

1Ki 8:30 Wilt, thou, therefore, hearken unto the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, whensoever they shall pray toward this place,—yea wilt, thou thyself, hear, in thine own dwelling-place, in the heavens, and, when thou hearest, then wilt thou forgive?

2Ki 4:33 So he went in, and shut the door upon them two,—and prayed unto Yahweh.

2Ki 6:17 Then prayed Elisha, and said, O Yahweh! open, I beseech thee, his eyes, that he may see. And Yahweh opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and lo! the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire, round about Elisha.

2Ki 6:18 And, when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto Yahweh, and said—Smite, I beseech thee, this people, with sudden blindness. And he smote them with sudden blindness, according to the word of Elisha.

2Ki 19:15 And Hezekiah prayed before Yahweh, and said, O Yahweh, God of Israel, inhabiting the cherubim, thou thyself, art GOD, alone, for all the kingdoms of the earth,—thou, didst make the heavens and the earth.

2Ki 20:2 Then he turned his face unto the wall,—and prayed unto Yahweh, saying:

2Ch 6:20 that thine eyes may be open toward this house, day and night, toward the place of which thou hast said thou wouldst set thy Name there,—to hearken unto the prayer which thy servant may pray towards this place:

2Ch 6:21 wilt thou therefore hearken unto the supplications of thy servant, and thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place,—yea wilt, thou thyself, hear, out of thine own dwelling-place, out of the heavens, and, when thou hearest, then wilt thou forgive?

2Ch 7:14 if my people upon whom my Name is called shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will, I myself, hear out of the heavens, and forgive their sin, and heal their land.

2Ch 32:20 And Hezekiah the king and Isaiah son of Amoz, the prophet, prayed concerning this,—and made outcry unto the heavens,

2Ch 32:24 ¶ In those days, was Hezekiah sick unto death,—and, when he prayed unto Yahweh, he was entreated of him and, a wonderful token, he gave him.

2Ch 33:13 and, when he prayed unto him, then was he entreated of him, and hearkened unto his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem, unto his own kingdom, and so Manasseh came to know, that, Yahweh, is God.

Ne 1:4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and I mourned certain days,—and continued fasting and praying, before the God of the heavens;

Ne 2:4 Then the king said to me, Concerning what, is it, thou, wouldst make request? So I prayed unto the God of the heavens,

Ne 4:9 howbeit we prayed unto our God,—and set a watch against them, day and night, because of them.

Job 42:8 Now, therefore, take unto you seven bullocks and seven rams, and go unto my servant Job, and ye shall offer up an ascending-sacrifice in your own behalf, and, Job my servant, shall pray over you,—for, him, will I accept, that I may not deal out to you disgrace, because ye have not spoken concerning me the thing that is right, like my servant Job.

Ps 5:2 Attend to the voice of my cry, **my King and my God, for, unto thee, do I pray.**

Ps 32:6 For this cause, will every man of lovingkindness pray unto thee, in time to obtain,—Surely, in the overflow of many waters, unto him, shall they not reach.

Ps 72:15 Let him live, then! And be there given unto him of the gold of Sheba,—Let prayer also be offered for him continually, All the day, let him be blessed.

Isa 37:15 And Hezekiah **prayed, unto Yahweh,** saying:

Isa 38:2 Then Hezekiah turned his face unto the wall,—and **prayed unto Yahweh;**

Isa 44:17 And, the residue thereof, Into a GOD, he maketh, Into his carved image,—Adoreth it, and boweth down, and prayeth unto it, And saith, Deliver me, for, my GOD, thou art!

Isa 45:14 Thus, saith Yahweh—The produce of Egypt and the gain of Ethiopia, and the Sabians, men of great stature, Unto thee, shall come over, And, thine, shall they become, After thee, shall they journey, In chains, shall they come over,—And, unto thee, shall they bow down, Unto thee, shall they pray saying, - Surely, in thee, is a GOD, And there is none, else—no, God!

Jer 7:16 ¶ Thou, therefore—Do not pray for this people, Neither lift up for them cry or prayer, Neither intercede with me,—For I am not going to hear thee.

Jer 11:14 Thou, therefore, do not pray for this people, Neither lift thou up for them cry or prayer,—For I am not going to hear, in the time that they cry unto me concerning their calamity.

Jer 14:11 And Yahweh said, unto me,—Do not pray for this people, for blessing;

Jer 32:16 ¶ Then **prayed I unto Yahweh,**—after I had delivered the scroll of purchase, unto Baruch son of Neriah, saying:—

Da 9:4 ¶ yea I **prayed unto Yahweh my God,** and made confession,—and said—I beseech thee, O Lord, the GOD great and to be revered, keeping the covenant and the lovingkindness, to them who love him, and to them who keep his commandments.

Jon 2:1 ¶ Then **prayed Jonah, unto Yahweh, his God,**—out of the belly of the fish;

Jon 4:2 So he **prayed unto Yahweh,** and said—Ah now! Yahweh! Was not, this, my word, while I was yet upon mine own soil? For this cause, did I hasten to flee unto Tarshish,—because I knew that, thou, art a GOD of favour and compassion, slow to anger, and abundant in lovingkindness, and art grieved over calamity.

4336 proseuchomai in the Septuagint:

Ge 20:7 But now return the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and shall pray [proseuchomai] for thee, and thou shalt live; but if thou restore her not, know that thou shalt die and all thine.

Ge 20:17 And Abraam prayed [proseuchomai] to God, and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his women servants, and they bore children.

Jon 2:1 ¶ (2:2) And Jonas prayed [proseuchomai] to the Lord his God out of the belly of the whale,

Jon 4:2 And he prayed [proseuchomai] to the Lord, and said, O Lord, were not these my words when I was yet in my land? therefore I made haste to flee to Tharsis; because I knew that thou are merciful and compassionate, long-suffering, and abundant in kindness, and repentest of evil.

Appendix B

Proseuchomai

Mt 6:6 But, thou, when thou wouldest pray, enter into thy closet, and, fastening thy door, **pray unto thy Father** who is in secret,—and, thy Father who seeth in secret, will reward thee.

Mt 6:9 ¶ Thus, therefore **pray, ye: Our Father,** who art in the heavens,—Hallowed be thy name,

Mt 26:39 And, going forward a little, he fell upon his face, **offering prayer, and saying—My Father!** If it is possible, let this cup pass from me,—Nevertheless, not as, I, will, but as, thou, wilt.

Mt 26:42 Again, a second time, departing **he prayed, saying: My Father!** If it is impossible for this to pass, except I, drink it, Accomplished, be, thy will.

Ac 1:24 And, **praying**, they said—**Thou Lord [Yahweh]!** observer of the hearts of all men! shew forth whom thou hast chosen,—of these two, one; —¹⁶

Ac 16:25 ¶ And, at midnight, Paul and Silas, being at **prayer**, began singing praise **unto God;** and the prisoners unto them, did hearken.

Col 1:3 ¶ We are giving thanks unto God, the Father of our Lord Jesus [[Christ]], always, for you, offering prayer,—

Col 4:3 **Praying**, at the same time, for us also,—**that, God**, would open unto us a door for the word, so that we may speak the sacred secret of the Christ—for the sake of which also I am in bonds,

2Th 1:11 ¶ Unto which end, we are also **praying continually for you, that our God** may count, you, worthy of your calling, and fulfill every good-pleasure of goodness and work of faith, with power,—

proseuche

Ac 12:5 ¶ Peter, therefore, was kept in the prison; but, **prayer**, was, earnestly, being made by the assembly, **unto God**, concerning him.

Ro 15:30 ¶ I beseech you, moreover, [[brethren]], through our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your **prayers** on my behalf **unto God,—**

Php 4:6 For nothing, be anxious, but, in everything, by your **prayer** and supplication with thanksgiving, let, your petitions, be made known **unto God;**

1Th 1:2 ¶ We are giving thanks unto God continually, concerning you all, making, mention, in our prayers,

Phm 1:4 I am giving thanks unto my God—always, making mention, of thee, in my prayers,

Re 8:3 And, another messenger, came, and took his stand at the altar, having a censer of gold: and there was given unto him much incense, that he might give it unto the **prayers of all the saints**, upon the altar of gold that is **before the throne**.

Re 8:4 And the smoke of the incense went up, with the **prayers of the saints**, out of the hand of the messenger **before God**.

Appendix C

(An informative article, from the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT) one may learn from, even though some of it is incorrect.)

euchomai [to wish, pray] ευχομαι {See GrkEng 2172}

euche [prayer, vow] ευχη {See GrkEng 2171}

proseuchomai [to pray] προσευχομαι {See GrkEng 4336}

proseuche [prayer, place of prayer] προσευχη {See GrkEng 4335}

euchomai, euche.

A. The Usage of euchomai, euche. In nonbiblical Greek these are the most comprehensive terms for invocation of the deity. The sense “to vow” is present as well as “to ask, pray.” The LXX has the word, but here, and even more so in the NT, proseuchomai becomes the main term.

¹⁶ 1Co 1:1 Paul, a called apostle of Jesus Christ, **through God's will...** 2Co 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, **through the will of God...** Eph 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, **through God's will...** Col 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the **will of God...** 2Ti 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, through the **will of God...**

1. “To pray, ask, beseech,” “prayer, petitionary prayer, invocation.” Both noun and verb occur in this sense in #Jas 5:15-16, thus ruling out any magical operation and perhaps implying prayer for forgiveness as well as healing. In #2Co 13:7,9 Paul uses the term when praying God that the Corinthians may not do wrong and may show improvement. His courteous wish of #Ac 26:29 also becomes a prayer when he adds the words “to God”: only God can bring about the conversion of Agrippa and his hearers.
2. “To vow, dedicate,” “vow.” Only the noun occurs in this sense in the NT. We find it in #Ac 18:18 21:23. The shaving of the head indicates that this is a Nazirite vow. {cf. #Nu 6:7,9,19}
3. The cultic connection weakens with time and euchomai can thus take on the more general sense of “to wish” or “to ask.” The salutation in #3Jo 2 reflects this. So does Paul’s statement in #Ro 9:3, where he could wish (not pray) that he himself might be cut off from Christ for his fellow Israelites. In #Ac 27:29 again the ship’s company wish rather than pray that day may come.

B. Prayer in the Greek World.

1. Greek prayer accords with Greek religion, which nonanimistically finds in the gods restricted forces of destiny, so that incantations are secondary in prayer, and sacrifice and prayer have a place in every sphere of life.

a. The Homeric prayers, though often stylistic devices, express this clearly. Homer’s heroes are conscious of their dependence on the gods, ascribe to them human impulses and emotions, and come to them in need, e.g., before battle. The favours sought show that humans have some control of life, and even in areas where the gods rule they may be swayed by prayers and offerings that impose an obligation on them, or by promises of future offerings if the prayers are answered. Cultic and moral demands are made, however, in the approach to the gods, though the approach itself is one of intimacy rather than fear.

b. In tragedy we find a greater concern for moral and spiritual blessings, e.g., honesty and piety. Prayer for revenge becomes prayer for just retribution. The stress on moral as well as cultic requirements is stronger.

c. Lyric poetry and philosophy combine eudaemonistic and more purely ethical concerns, e.g., wealth but also protection against pride. Philosophy tries to reduce the eudaemonistic element but in so doing robs prayer of its vitality. Yet Plato reaches a new moral depth, and we begin to find prayer for the remission of moral guilt. In later philosophy prayer becomes more general petition for the good, sometimes as intercession for others. But a note of scepticism arises. A failure of Zeus to answer displays his impotence.

2. Hellenism combines Greek features with Near Eastern influences. The literature again reflects popular thinking and practice.

a. In the Stoic-Cynic diatribe we see that practical monotheism has replaced the earlier polytheism. If prayer is offered to many gods, these represent the one God. Since this God is impersonal, there is no real petition. The requests simply reflect the ideal that is to be sought, and since one can attain this oneself, there is no final need to pray. Prayer for health is repudiated; the gods do not give this, and therefore we should not pray for it. The Zeus of Cleanthes is little more than fate, and the apatheia of the wise makes it impossible for them to invoke the deity. Later we find some return to concrete petition in Marcus Aurelius, but in general he, too, extols prayer for inner development as alone appropriate for the true sage.

b. The mysteries rest on a basis of individual religious life, and in their prayers initiates experience with awe the nearness of the deity to whom they belong by their dedication, who controls their destiny, and from whom they expect salvation. Yet prayer is only penultimate; the vision of God is ultimate. Hence prayer is primarily adoration, then thanksgiving. Prayers for mundane things are rare, there is little concern about guilt, the great aim is to seek escape from natural frailty in ecstasy, and intercession for others focuses on their ignorance (cf. in contrast #2Co 12:1ff.).

c. In Philo and the Wisdom of Solomon the Jewish elements predominate. For Philo only those who pray truly live. The high priest’s task is to intercede for the people, humanity, and all creation. The people’s strength lies in the presence of the God who answers prayer. Prayer must be with purity and penitence. The prayer for mercy is always heard. But in general God grants only what is good for us. Prayer should

be more for moral than material blessings. In Wisdom, prayer gives the soul true freedom, all may pray without fear of rejection, and we have all received so many gifts that thanksgiving is always in order.

d. Inscriptions add little to our knowledge of Greek prayer. We find public petitions for prosperity, thanksgivings for healings, and formulas that seek to use divine power for the purposes of exorcism, medicine, and eroticism. [H. GREEVEN, II, 775-84]

C. Prayer in the OT.

1. OT Usage. For “to pray” the OT uses the not very common word *’tr*, and sometimes *pll*, but several other words belong to the sphere of prayer.

a. Proper Verbs. For *’tr* an original sense “to sacrifice” has been proposed, but in the OT it always means “to pray (to God)” or “to ask (God).” *pll* also denotes either “to pray” or “to ask for.”

b. Other Words. The idea of prayer may also be suggested by terms denoting “to wish,” “to present oneself,” “to induce God’s favour,” by various words for speaking or crying, and also by words for sighing, groaning, roaring, and weeping.

c. Prayers of praise and thanksgiving are very common and therefore terms for “to extol,” “to magnify,” and “to confess” belong to the area of prayer. So, too, do verbs denoting “to murmur,” “to meditate,” “to reflect,” and the group signifying “to exult,” “to rejoice,” “to make merry.”

d. Words for music and singing must also be mentioned, e.g., singing, leading, playing instruments, and making music.

e. *hsthwh*, the term for respectful greeting, describes the disposition as well as the attitude of prayer. Even when not followed by prayer, it often denotes the worship of God. {#Le 26:1 2Ki 5:18, etc.} Prayers of different kinds follow in #Ge 24:26 Ex 34:8 1Sa 1:28, etc. For its use at great festivals, cf. #1Ch 29:20 2Ch 7:3 Ne 8:6, etc. Kneeling is mentioned as a similar gesture, {#1Ki 8:54} and we also find standing in prayer. {#1Sa 1:26 Jer 18:20} The hands may be stretched out to God {#Isa 1:15 Jer 4:31} or lifted up. {#Ps 28:2} (For a detailed survey of the Hebrew terms, cf. TDNT, II, 785-90).

2. The Main Features of OT Prayer.

a. Prayer and Faith in Yahweh. The OT demands the exclusive worship of Yahweh; hence all prayer is directed to the one God, the covenant God of Israel. Israel is conscious of the might, wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness of this God, but also of his holiness and righteousness. Individuals with their faith share in the faith of the people and therefore in God’s relationship with the people. This governs their prayer life, gives it the necessary confidence, and embeds it in the people’s history as the history of the ongoing action toward them of their gracious, faithful, and merciful God from whom they may expect future salvation. Faith in this God, however, is faith in the God who is also the world’s Creator and Sustainer and disposes of all things in heaven and earth. Yet faith in God does not give overconfidence in prayer. Petitions are supported by confession, appeals to the past, and remembrance of God’s mercy. God cannot be taken for granted. He is a living person in his love and wrath. Seeing and hearing all things, he is always the sovereign Lord. Answers, then, depend on his personal counsel and decision.

b. The Content of Prayer. What do Israelites pray for? Since all good things come from the Creator God of Israel, one may ask him and thank him for all things. Bodily affairs play a big role in OT prayers, e.g., in the Psalms. Body and soul being so closely related, bodily goods merge into spiritual. Prayers for the overthrow of enemies are common, whether the enemies are personal or national. These prayers are the outbursts of an oppressed or exiled people, {cf. #Ps 137 or #Ps 149} and they express, not just a human desire for revenge, but a concern for divine justice, i.e., the triumph of the good represented by Israel, and the defeat of wickedness represented by her foes. Alongside these requests, we find, of course, passionate cries for such spiritual blessings as forgiveness and the bliss of fellowship with God.

c. Prayer and the Cultus. Prayers are closely related to sanctuaries, sacrifices, feasts, and solemn days (cf. #Ge 12:8 1Sa 1; Da 12:11 Isa 56:7). The temple forms a special focus; hands are stretched out to it or to the holy city. {#Ps 5:7 Da 6:11} Yet prayer is tied neither to the sanctuary nor to the land. It may be offered in foreign countries {#Ge 21:32 1Ki 17:20} and in one’s own home. {#Ge 25:21} Daniel prays three times a day (#Da 6:11 cf. #Ps 55:17), and we find morning and evening prayers in #Ps 4; 5. While prayer may accompany sacrifice, it can be rated above it, {#Ps 50:23 69:30-31 40:6ff.} and songs may be

described as spiritual sacrifices. {#Ps 107:22} Yet there is no absolute antithesis. Abraham sets up altars when he calls on God, {#Ge 12:8 etc.} forms of prayer are given for the offering of firstfruits, {#De 26:13ff.} the Psalms often refer to sacrifices in connection with prayers, {#Ps 22:25-26} and we find prayers along with sacrifices in #Neh 12 etc. Fasting may also accompany prayer. {#Jer 14:12 Ne 1:4 Ezr 8:23} Vows of praise as well as sacrifice are made, and Hannah makes a vow of dedication. {#1Sa 1:11}

d. Prayer and Magic. In a few passages words or acts might suggest magical concepts, e.g., Moses stretching out his rod in #Ex 17:9, or Joshua addressing the sun and moon in #Jos 10:12-13, or Elijah stretching himself on the child in #1Ki 17:21, but in all cases prayer to God divests the words or acts of any magical character. Faith in Yahweh crowds out magic, replacing it by true prayer (cf. #1Ki 18:41ff. Jas 5:18).

3. Review of Prayer in the OT.

a. Prayer in the History Books. Specific references to prayer are comparatively few, but it is often implied, {#Ge 30:6,17,27} and we have some beautiful examples. {#Ge 24; 32:10ff.} Moses is depicted as a great intercessor. {#Ex 32:11ff. etc.} The short prayers of Samson are forceful and fervent, {#Jud 15:18} and Hannah's prayer is a fine instance of quiet outpouring even if couched in more general terms. The David stories contain a magnificent prayer by David in #2Sa 7:18ff., and music and song accompany the bringing up of the ark in #2Sa 6. From Solomon we have the royal prayer at Gibeon {#1Ki 3:6ff.} and the great prayer of dedication. {#1Ki 8:23ff.} In the Elijah stories the powerful prayer of #1Ki 18:36-37 stands in contrast to the empty crying of the priests of Baal. In 1 and 2 Chronicles we have many instances of both liturgical prayer {e.g., #1Ch 16} and individual prayer (cf. the prayers of Asa and Manasseh). Nehemiah is also a man of prayer, {#Ne 1:4 etc.} and Ezra makes a great impression with his prayer of penitence concerning mixed marriages. {#Ezr 9:6ff. 10:1ff.}

b. The Wisdom Literature. All three friends tell Job to pray, {#Job 5:8 etc.} and Job himself is faithful, if sometimes critical, in prayer. {#Job 12:4 etc.; #Job 9:16 etc.; #Job 42:2ff.} Proverbs commends the prayer of confession in #Pr 28:13, assures the righteous of God's answer in #Pr 15:29, and puts prayer above the sacrifice of the wicked in #Pr 15:8 Ec 5:2 warns against wordiness in prayer.

c. Prayer in the Prophets. We find here less material than might be expected. The prayers of sinners weary God (#Isa 1:15 cf. #Am 5:23-24). He will not hear them. {#Mic 3:4} Amos himself prays for the forgiveness of the people and is heard, {#Am 7:1ff.} and Hosea issues a call for penitent prayer. {#Ho 14:2ff.} Jeremiah, too, prays for the people {#Jer 10:23ff.} but is forbidden by God to do so. {#Jer 7:16} He also prays for God's righteous judgments. {#Jer 17:12ff.} True seeking of God, he claims, will lead to finding (#Jer 29:13-14: cf. #Isa 55:6 58:9 65:24). Joel calls for a day of penitential prayer, {#Joe 1:14ff. 2:17} while Jonah offers a prayer of thanksgiving for his deliverance, {#Jon 2:3ff.} summons Nineveh to prayer, {#Jon 3:8} and utters a discouraged prayer for death. {#Jon 4:2-3}

d. The Psalter. This is the great treasury of OT prayer, combining beauty of expression with wealth of content. The prayers are more commonly those of individuals than of the community, but they stand against a cultic background and their highly developed personal piety is embedded in the collective awareness of belonging to God's people. Few of the psalms offer clear evidence of their original cultic use, but all of them show that even when piety is no longer closely tied to cultic observance, it still has its source in public worship. Dominant themes are complaint and grief and the earnest seeking of help from God, but hope and assurance arise out of complaint, and the note of praise and thanksgiving is almost always sounded. The forms and imagery, of course, are in many cases stylized, as may be seen from comparison with Babylonian and Egyptian psalms, but these prayers have a supreme religious force that can derive only from the psalmists' God and that makes the Psalter a universal Christian possession which new converts easily appropriate and from which they learn not only to pray but also to set themselves in the saving history which through the Psalms reaches out into all the world. [J. HERRMANN, II, 785-800]

D. Prayer in the Synagogue. Destroying the temple, the Babylonians helped to force prayer into the centre of Jewish piety. Only regular prayer could replace regular worship. This might make prayer superficial, but formulas etc. are regarded less highly by the Jews than other peoples, and a vigorous life pulses

through all the forms. Praying two or three times a day is attested. {cf. #Ac 3:1} Rehearsal of the Shema is a prayer as well as a confession. The chief prayer, which develops early, consists of eighteen benedictions, beginning with three thanksgivings, moving on to petitions for knowledge, penitence, restoration, etc., and closing with a thanksgiving for God's loving rule and prayers for peace. The we-form gives evidence of a continuing sense of community. Prayers are to be offered two or three times a day, and shorter times develop (and may also be earlier). Prayers at table also pre-date the Christian era, but we cannot be too sure about the dating of other fixed forms. There is plenty of scope, of course, for independent prayer, though it is debated whether individual petitions should be put in the eighteen benedictions. Casuistry develops at times regarding individual points, but the prayers of Jesus stand firmly in the context of Judaism, and if he censures the prayer of the time it is only when he finds impure motives, {#Mt 6:5} or sees prayer to be a pious mask, {#Mr 12:40} or detects in it an impenitent heart. {#Lu 18:10ff.} Hardly a clause in the Lord's Prayer either does not or could not stand in Jewish prayers, and the effective prayer life of Jesus, as the first disciples record it, clearly has its human roots in the rich prayer life of his people.

E. Prayer in the NT.

1. Review, Presuppositions, and Content. In prayer believers draw on the powers of the new aeon as Jesus did in the garden and on the cross. That Jesus was a man of prayer may be seen from his withdrawals for prayer, his blessings at meals, and his prayers at exorcisms and healings. He finds assurance in prayer, prays for his disciples, and gains help in prayer during the passion. In John his prayer at the raising of Lazarus {#Joh 11:41-42} convinces those around him of his divine mission. His praying is so much an attitude that individual acts are secondary. In view of his unique relation to the Father, his prayers are not put on the same level as those of the disciples. Distinctive of Christian prayer is the certainty of being heard in virtue of God's love, so that all things may be brought to him. {#Mr 11:24} Indeed, the answers exceed the asking. {cf. #2Co 12:7ff.} Confidence in prayer lies behind the addressing of God as Father (and even Abba). Prayer for the kingdom is fundamental, but future salvation is so close to present life that one may at the same time pray for daily bread, remission of sins, and deliverance from temptation. Constant prayer is needed because the filial relation to God needs constant renewal. Jesus in giving the Lord's Prayer does not mean to restrict freedom and yet the text has a certain normativeness, since Jesus is not hostile to formal prayer and the disciples require and request guidance in prayer. {#Lu 11:1ff.} In prayer Christians are to avoid selfishness, {#Jas 4:2ff.} to remember that this aeon is coming to an end, {#1Pe 4:7} and to honour each other. {#1Pe 3:7} External things can have a place in prayer. {#Mr 13:18 Ro 1:10} Intercession is important, e.g., for the sick and imprisoned. {#Jas 5:14ff. Ac 12:5} Prayer is to be offered for the brethren and even for enemies (cf. Jesus on the cross). Thanksgiving is also an integral part of prayer (cf. the graces at meals, the greetings in epistles, and Paul's cry in #Ro 7:25). The Spirit is at work in prayer, attesting to us that we are God's children, and interceding for us in our frailty. {#Ro 8:15,26} Prayer may be offered kneeling {#Ac 21:5} or standing. {#Mr 11:25} Common as well as private prayer is in order (#1Co 14:13ff. Mt 18:19 with its special promise for the two or three.)

2. The Words Used. aiteo ("to want something") is not used for Jesus' own prayers but occurs when Jesus summons his disciples to pray. erotao is used in John with an emphasis on intimate fellowship with God; only in #1Jo 5:16 does it refer to believers' prayers, parakaleo also posits closeness to the one addressed, e.g., in #Mr 5:10 2Co 12:8 Mt 26:53. As in Jewish usage, eulogeo occurs in grace at meals, eucharisteo is the term for thanksgiving, krazein in #Ro 8:15 expresses fervency in prayer, epikaleomai, often used with onoma, stresses the element of confession (invoking the name). {#Ac 9:14 22:16} But since prayer commonly means petition, the words used most frequently are deomai and deesis. The former, which may also have a secular sense, almost always denotes petition; {#Ac 10:2 is the exception} deesis is more general. {cf. #Lu 5:33 Php 4:6} A more exclusively religious word group now demands separate treatment.

proseuchomai, proseuche. The construction may be with accusative of object, with hina, or with hyper and peri. The genitive with proseuche usually refers to the one praying, but in #Lu 6:12 to the one addressed. James uses the strong proseuche proseuchesthai in #Lu 5:17.

1. “To pray,” “to pray to,” “to ask,” “prayer,” “petitionary prayer.” While deeseis almost always denotes asking, proseuchesthai contains no narrower definition of content and refers to calling on God. The nouns are harder to distinguish. Both may denote prayer as a habit or a single act (#Lu 22:45 Php 1:4; cf. the plural in #Ro 1:10 Lu 5:33). The difference seems to be in content; deesis is more specific (cf. #Lu 1:13 and #Ac 10:31). Yet this should not be pressed in view of the deesis and proseuchas of #1Ti 2:1.

2. proseuche can also denote a “place of prayer,” as in Acts 16:13ff., which probably refers to a synagogue (synagogues were often built near water). This use is rare in secular Greek but has been found on an inscription. It occurs in Philo but not in the canonical books of the LXX. [H. GREEVEN, II, 800-808]