

*Greetings:*

This is the second of six important studies on the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. This particular study is a gold-mine as Jesus (the Son) reveals His relationship with the Heavenly Father. You will be blessed!

*Brian W. Hooper.*

# SEEKING GOD THE FATHER

## PART TWO: NEW TESTAMENT

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### PREFACE TO PART TWO NEW TESTAMENT

In our first series on “**Seeking God the Father**” (in the Old Testament) we began our search in the first part of our Bible and saw God’s work in creation, delivering his people from bondage, teaching them the meaning of blood sacrifices, helping them through their many trials and pointing them to the future.

But there was one very strange thing about our Old Testament journey. God is hardly ever referred to as “Father” in the Old Testament. But where there is mention it is very significant. Psalm 2:7 has God the Father owning the Son to come. God says to David in Psalm 89:26 that David will call him “Father, the Rock, my Saviour.” I have found just nine references to God being called “Father” in the Old Testament.

The New Testament is a different story. I have counted **177** references to God as “Father” in the Gospels and 263 in all the New Testament. As an example, take a look at John’s Gospel chapter 14. Count how many times “God” is called “Father” by Jesus in that one chapter. So – if Jesus called God “FATHER”, the “Fatherhood” of God must be important. We will explore ten selected occasions.

# INTRODUCTION

The idea of a triune God is not clear in the Old Testament. However, there are very clear indications that there is more to God than singleness. The first word for God in the Old Testament, and the word in most general use, is *Elohim*. The interesting thing about this name is that it is a plural noun. It hints that our God is more complex than simply singular. In contrast with this most general name of God there is *JeHoVaH*. *Jehovah* is an artificial English word put together from the four Hebrew consonants JHVH and the vowels of the Hebrew word *Adonai*, or Lord. The Jews felt they should not say the name of their holy God (*JHVH*) so they used *Adonai* (Lord) instead. Later, the vowels of *Adonai* were written in to the manuscripts and so people have been saying *Jehovah*.

In Genesis 1:26 when God said, “*Let US make man in OUR image.*” God wasn’t talking to the angels. God was talking with someone who was part of Him. Our God had an image referred to as “our image:”. This is an early biblical hint of our triune God.

Another Old Testament hint is the appearance of that interesting person *The Angel of the Lord*. It is believed by many Christian Scholars that this “Angel” is none other than Jesus Christ – the eternal Son of God – appearing in the Old Testament times. It is a fascinating study to trace, through the Old Testament, the appearances of Jesus Christ as “The Angel of the Lord”. No appearance by Jesus in the Old Testament is unimportant. This remarkable insight is covered in our third series of these studies.

One of the clearest pictures of a special person close to the Most High God is given in Daniel 7 verses 13 and 14. “*I was watching in the night visions and saw One like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days. They brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away. And His kingdom shall not be destroyed.*” In the New Testament, Jesus identified himself with this special person by frequently designating himself as the **Son of Man** (Matthew 24:3, 30 etc.)

A further hint of the complexity of God in the Old Testament is the many references to God’s *Spirit*. The Spirit is described as an agent in creation (Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13; Isaiah 32:15). The Spirit sustains what has been created (Psalm 104:30; Job 34:14). The creative agent which animates the universe also vitalises the human organism (Genesis 2:7; Job 33:4). When we come to the New Testament, Jesus teaches that this “Spirit” of God is not only intimately connected with God but is also a distinct personality (John 14:16). This verse has the **Son** praying to the **Father** about the **Spirit** coming. In our final two series we will experience walking with God’s wonderful Holy Spirit.

With the coming of **God’s Son, Jesus the Christ (Messiah)**, we find on almost every page of the New Testament some mention of Jesus as the Son of God or of God the Father. We cannot study every reference to God the Father, but we will list them – all 263 mentions – and enjoy looking at 10 specific references to “Father” God.

Brian William Hooper

## AN OVERVIEW OF SEEKING THE FATHER

1.	JESUS – CAME FROM THE FATHER    John 1:1-14	Beginnings
2.	JESUS TAUGHT – “OUR FATHER...”    Matthew 6:9-13	How to pray
3.	PHILIP – “SHOW US THE FATHER.”    John 14:1-21	He is in me
4.	THE FATHER AND THE SPIRIT            John 14:26, 15:26-16:16	Sent to you
5.	JESUS PRAYS TO THE FATHER            John 17:1-26	Time has come
6.	“FATHER, FORGIVE THEM.”            Luke 23:34	On the cross
7.	“FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT.”    Matthew 28:19	Baptism
8.	“WAIT FOR THE FATHER’S GIFT.”      Acts 1:1-4	The Holy Spirit
9.	FATHER GOD IN THE CHURCH            Romans 1:7	The Epistles
10.	FATHER GOD ON THE THRONE            Revelation 3:21	Eternity

## CHOSEN REFERENCES TO GOD THE FATHER

*“The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, **who came from the Father**, full of grace and truth.”* John 1:15

*“Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know **I had to be in my Father’s house?**”*  
Luke 2:49

*“**Our Father in heaven**, hallowed be your name...”* Matthew 6:9

*“**I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.**”* John 14:10

*“When the Counsellor comes, whom **I will send to you from the Father**, the Spirit of Truth **who goes out from the Father**, he will testify about me.”* John 15:26

*“**Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.**”* John 17:1

*“**Father, forgive them**, for they do not know what they are doing.”* Luke 23:34

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the **name of the Father** and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* Matthew 28:19

*“Do not leave Jerusalem, but **wait for the gift my Father promised...**”* Acts 1:4

*“To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints. Grace and peace **from God our Father** and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”* Romans 1:7

*“To him who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame **and sat down with my Father on his throne.**”* Revelation 3:21

## A REFRESHER - A STORY JESUS TOLD

Our **Introductory Study** was based on Luke 15. Jesus told the parable to illustrate the threefold God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We repeat it summarised as follows:

**Luke 15: 1-3** *“Then Jesus told them this parable.”*

This comment by Jesus is the key to understanding the whole story. Jesus told them *“this parable”* or *“this story”*. Jesus did not say *“three stories”*. He expected his listeners to understand the three stories he was about to tell them were really three parts of one story. All the parables give us an insight into the way God works both in heaven and earth. The parable we are about to study is the most explicit illustration of how the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit co-ordinate to seek the lost.

**Luke 15:4-7** *“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. He leaves the ninety-nine in the open country and goes after the lost sheep until he finds it?”*

- There are 100 sheep and 1 gets lost. The shepherd goes to find it.
- He puts it joyfully on his shoulders. He calls his friends - “Rejoice with me!”
- Jesus says that this illustrates the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.

**Luke 15:8-10** *“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one..”*

Then, we read about a woman who has lost her ten coins. Some writers say that a bracelet of 10 silver coins was a wedding gift from the husband to the wife and of similar status as a wedding ring today. The ten coins, in Jewish circles, represented the Ten Commandments. To lose one coin was a double loss. Nevertheless, she found her precious coin so we have:

- The woman lost one of her ten precious coins. She diligently looked for it.
- She found it, and called for her friends and neighbours to rejoice with her.
- Again, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels over one who repents.

**Luke 15:11-32** *There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, “Father, give me my share of the estate”. So he divided his property between them.”*

Please note that the shepherd searched for the sheep, as did the woman. But the father stayed at home. What does that tell us? It is interesting that, according to verse 17, the wayward son still had the father in his memory – even though there was a great distance between them. Repentance is sorrow for sin, confession that the offence has been committed against a holy God, and change of heart that manifests itself in change of action. Thus we have the following main points:

- There is a father with two sons. The younger son desires to go his own way.
- The Father stays at home. The younger son, in genuine repentance, returns.
- The Father is overjoyed to welcome him back. There is a time of great rejoicing – except that the elder brother does not share it.

## JESUS – CAME FROM THE FATHER

We now come to a study of “The Father” (God) in the New Testament. So we begin at the first four books of the New Testament, which are four eyewitness accounts of the life on earth of Jesus Christ. There is not just “one official biography” by someone famous like Paul the Apostle – and nor did Jesus write anything about himself (autobiography). Four people who followed him, lived with him, ate with him, spent much time listening to his teaching and observing his actions, who watched him die by crucifixion, and were surprised by his post-death appearances have each written their story of his life.

**MATTHEW’S GOSPEL** was by Matthew the Apostle and former tax collector. It may have been the first Gospel to be written in the period from A.D.50 and before A.D.70 – the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. [There is discussion as to whether Matthew or Mark was first to be written because over 90% of the material in them is common to both. Matthew or Mark could have used the other Gospel as a source for his gospel. Or they may have both collaborated together and produced their own Gospels. Both had access to information from all living followers of Jesus.] Matthew has one main purpose: To show his Jewish readers that Jesus is their Messiah he uses **“Father in heaven”** and **“heavenly Father”** frequently to honour the Jewish reverential reluctance to use the name of God (5:16,45,48; 6:14,26; 7:11,21 etc.) Matthew begins the life of Jesus with his ancestral line going back to Abraham. He then gives details of Jesus’ birth and early childhood. **“Father” occurs 42 times in Matthew.**

**MARK’S GOSPEL**, according to many scholars, was the first to be written somewhere between A.D.50 and 70, before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D.70. John Mark was the son of a Mary whose home in Jerusalem was the meeting place of the disciples of Jesus (Acts 12:12). John Mark was not a disciple of Jesus but was one of the many “outer followers”. He was the cousin of Barnabas (Colossians 4:10). It has been suggested that he was the young man who fled naked on the night of Jesus’ arrest (Mark 14:51-52). He was a very close companion and friend of the Apostle Peter and his Gospel is primarily the words of Peter. In a sense, Peter is the real author and Mark the editor of the material. Nevertheless, we can depend on Mark’s Gospel as being very accurate because Peter and Mark would have ensured together that this story of Jesus – the only one being written to their knowledge – was an accurate account of what Jesus said and did. Mark’s story of Jesus begins not with the birth of Jesus but at the point John the Baptist arrives on the scene announcing Jesus. **“Father” occurs 3 times in Mark**

**LUKE’S GOSPEL** was written between A.D. 59 and 75. Luke wrote his Gospel before he wrote his Book of the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 1:1-3). For this reason, some scholars feel an early date is better (59-60) as Luke does not mention Nero’s persecution of Christians that began in A.D.64 nor the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70. Luke’s account of the Acts ends with Paul’s imprisonment in Rome. That began in A.D.62 so A.D. 62 seems a likely date of Luke’s Gospel. Most scholars believe Luke was the third to write a Gospel on the life of Jesus. However, it was addressed to a specific individual – a lover of God – who went by the name Theophilus (God-lover). Luke was a special friend of Paul and a doctor (Colossians 4:14). He was a Greek and his Gospel is designed to show that Jesus welcomed Gentiles into his kingdom. Luke begins his story of Jesus by tracing Jesus’ ancestry back through the human line to Adam and through Adam to God. Luke also gives a detailed account of the human birth of Jesus as is befitting for a physician. **“Father” occurs 20 times in Luke.**

**JOHN’S GOSPEL** (like the others) has two views as to when it was written. One view, based on a very early church historian (Eusebius quoting Clement of Alexandria) says that John wrote to supplement the others. True, it is quite different, and has teaching and miracles of Jesus not found in the other three.

This view puts the date of writing from A.D.80. It is also true that John was a young man when Jesus was alive and lived to be very old when he was exiled on Patmos (The Book of the Revelation.) The second view suggests that John wrote independently and did so in the A.D.50's and before A.D.70. One supporting verse for this view is John 5:2 which states "Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool.." Jerusalem, together with the Sheep Gate and pool, were destroyed in A.D.70. However, this could simply be looking back to a time when Jesus was there. John begins his Gospel quite differently from the other three. Whereas:

- Mark goes back to the announcement by John the Baptist of the adult Jesus
- Matthew (a) records the natural birth of Jesus but (b) traces his ancestry to Abraham
- Luke (a) also records the birth of Jesus and (b) traces his ancestry to Adam and God
- John, like Mark, does not mention (a) Jesus' natural birth but goes (b) direct to God.

**"Father" occurs 112 times in John.**

<b>Reading:</b>	<b>John 1:1-14</b>	<b>IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD</b>
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**1-5** *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

**6-9** *There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all people might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every person was coming into the world.*

**10-13** *He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

**14** *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, **who came from the FATHER**, full of grace and truth."*

- **John** is the first to mention *the FATHER*. John has "Father" (God) 112 times.
- **Luke** is next (2:49) when the boy Jesus speaks of his "Father" - and has 20 mentions.
- **Matthew's** first "Father" is in the Sermon on the Mount (5:16). He has 42 mentions.
- **Mark's** first "Father" is in 11:25 where Jesus teaches forgiveness. He has 3 mentions.

<b>John 1:1-5</b>	<b>THE WORD WAS WITH GOD AND THE WORD WAS GOD</b>
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**"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD"** is one of the clearest statements asserting the deity of Jesus Christ there is in the New Testament. There are groups (e.g. Jehovah's Witnesses) who do not accept that Jesus is God. The Jehovah's Witnesses Bible – The New World Translation – deliberately mistranslates John 1:1 with "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god." – thus trying to make Jesus less than the one true God. The "translators" of the New World Bible are unknown and will not make their names known. Jehovah's Witnesses say this is because the translators wish to give "all the glory to God". Unfortunately, top scholars in Bible languages all say that the New World Translation is faulty. Dr.H.H. Rowley in his "How Not To Translate The Bible" (pp40-41) says, "From

beginning to end this volume (NWT) is a shining example of how the Bible should not be translated.” I could quote others, but space forbids. The wording of John 1:1 is very clear in the Greek New Testament. It states that:

- Jesus (the Word) was “**In the beginning**”. This is an allusion to Genesis Chapter 1 verse 1 where it says, “In the beginning God created...”. Jesus later says (John 17:5) that he existed with the Father before creation – before time and history.
- Jesus (the Word) was “**with God**”. This suggests equality as well as association.
- Jesus (the Word) “**was God**”. What a wonderful concept! Without confusion of the persons, Jesus is “God” yet God is not the Word but includes the Word.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

1. What part did Jesus play in the creation of everything? [You might find the following helpful: John 1:3 may be translated “Everything came into being through him (where “made” Greek *ginomai* is better translated “came into being”) and without him not one thing came into being which has come into being.”]
2. Have a look at Colossians 1:15-17 and Hebrews 1:2, 10 and 4:3. What does this add to your understanding of the person of Jesus Christ?
3. In your own words explain the difference between “**with God**” and “**was God**”.
4. Explain why “**the Word**” is Jesus, and is God, yet God is not just “the Word”.

#### Luke 2:49 “DIDN’T YOU KNOW I HAD TO BE IN MY FATHER’S HOUSE”

One of the New Testament’s most remarkable verses: In this only recorded account of the boyhood of Jesus, he points to his personal duty to his Father in heaven. Mary had said, “Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you” (v.48). Jesus was not rebuking Mary, nor being disrespectful, but was politely conveying that he also had a responsibility to his heavenly Father with “Why were you searching for me? Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” At 12 years of age he was very aware of his relationship to God, yet he was also obedient to his earthly parents (v.51).

<b>“OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN...”</b>
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OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN  
 HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME  
 YOUR KINGDOM COME  
 YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN  
 GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD  
 FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS  
 AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS  
 AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION  
 BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL  
 FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY  
 FOREVER  
 AMEN

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

<b>Reading:</b>	<b>Matthew 6:5-15</b>	<b>JESUS TEACHES ON HOW TO PRAY</b>
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There are two prayers recorded in the Gospels we call “The Lord’s Prayer”. The first is in Matthew chapter 6 and the other is in John chapter 17. The first is the prayer Jesus taught his followers. The second was his private prayer to his heavenly Father in the garden before his crucifixion. We will look at the second in our Study number 5.

The “Lord’s Prayer” according to Matthew is short but powerful. As Professor Homer Kent of Grace Theological Seminary (Indiana) says, “...a marvel of broad scope and brevity.” Dr.Kent goes on to say, Though it was not intended to be recited superstitiously, and it does not embody all of his teaching about prayer (cf. John 16:23,24), yet it can be prayed (not just recited) with sincerity by all true believers.”

First of all, we will read what led Jesus to give the prayer. Secondly, we will look at the seven petitions that Jesus taught us and seek to discover as much meaning as we can.

#### WHAT LED JESUS TO GIVE THE PRAYER

In Jesus’ time, there were times of the day when it was appropriate for Hebrew people to stop wherever they were and stand praying to God. Those that Jesus spoke of were the ‘hypocrites’ who arranged their arrival at places that were focal points of public attention. One such place would be in the synagogue precincts where the synagogue officials could notice them and perhaps think that they were very devoted. Another place would be on a street corner, which afforded maximum exposure by being seen from several directions. Jesus did not condemn standing in a public place and praying. He looked into the hearts of those that put themselves on public display and condemned the motives of their hearts.

Public prayer was not wrong, for Jesus himself prayed publicly, Luke 10:21,22; John 11:41,42. But vain display was condemned. Jesus goes on to highly commend private prayer. He says to go into a private

place, unseen by others, so that God alone could see you and read the sincerity of your heart. He gives some pitfalls to avoid in private prayer:

1. REPETITION. Do not ‘flood’ God with repetition or ‘babbling’ as pagans do.
2. LENGTH. Do not just roll out a multitude of words and use much time.

But remember that God knows what you are going to say before you begin to pray. So, withdraw quietly into your private place and speak naturally and sincerely to God.

### THE SEVEN PETITIONS

The prayer is beautifully symmetrical:

#### **THE HEAVENLY ASPECT**

1. THE FATHER IN HEAVEN
2. THE FATHER IS HOLY
3. THE FATHER’S KINGDOM

#### **THE EARTHLY ASPECT**

5. OUR DAILY FOOD
6. WE HAVE TO FORGIVE
7. WE FACE TEMPTATION AND EVIL

And the middle petition, or statement, links both aspects together:

4. THE FATHER’S WILL BE DONE ON **EARTH** AS IT IS IN **HEAVEN**

#### **OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN**

Addressing God as “Father” was not common in Old Testament prayers. But with the revelation that Jesus called himself, and was, the “Son” of God, calling God “Father” became frequent. We will see this in the lists of verses using the designation “Father”.

#### **HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME**

The word “hallowed” means “be held in reverence, treated as holy”.

#### **YOUR KINGDOM COME**

The reference to the “kingdom” is the Messianic kingdom. It is not any kingdom that will come during the church age, but when the Messiah comes. It does not mean that it will begin after Jesus rose from the dead, for he ascended to heaven. He did so, however, with the promise that he was returning to earth at some point. This return will usher in the Messianic kingdom. Both Jews and Christians will have an interest in its arrival.

#### **YOUR WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN**

What a wonderful statement this is. In heaven there exists the absolute perfect will of God. All of heaven is in loving harmony, obedience and existence. We are asked to pray that the state of heaven will become evident on earth. What changes would take place!

#### **GIVE US TODAY OUR DAILY BREAD**

“Bread” refers to the necessities – not the luxuries – of life. Bread was the most common food of the time and thus represents food generally. Jesus is saying that we need to depend upon our heavenly Father, day by day, for our food for the body. Implicit in our humble prayer for daily food is that God will satisfy our needs.

Dr. Kent tells us that the term “daily” is a rarely-used expression found only once in secular Greek. Its meaning could be “daily”, “necessary for existence”, and “for the coming day.”

**FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS**

“Debts”. The New International Version has an interesting note: “Moral debts, i.e., sins (see note on Luke 11:4).” That is, if you have a copy of the NIV Bible with notes!

This does not mean debts in terms of owing money, or of needing to return a good deed. The word “sins” would be more appropriate. (“Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.”) These are not the sins of the unbeliever, for Jesus taught this prayer only to disciples not unbelievers. And it is incumbent upon believers, and believers only, to forgive the sins of others towards them. Then God will forgive us our sins. The case of a believer confessing his or her sin before God and asking forgiveness while withholding forgiveness from someone else is hypocritical. A Christian who forgives others easily has discovered how much God has forgiven them (Ephesians 4:32). An unforgiving spirit is itself sin and should be confessed. Jesus on the cross said, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they are doing.” How wide and endless is this forgiveness?

**AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION**

James 1:13 and 14 says, “When tempted, no one should say ‘God is tempting me!’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does God tempt anyone. But each one of us is tempted when, by our own evil desire, we are enticed and dragged away.”

Luke 22:40 has, “On reaching the place, Jesus said to them, ‘Pray that you will not fall into temptation’.”

This is a plea that God will spare the believer needless temptations and guard the believer against temptations that lead into sin.

**BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL**

Some later manuscripts add “one” so that the reading is, “Deliver us from the evil one.”

**FOR YOURS IS THE KINGDOM AND  
THE POWER AND THE GLORY FOREVER**

Some later manuscripts add this doxology (verse 13b) which seems to come from 1 Chronicles 29:11 which says in full: **“Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.**

## DISCUSSION POINTS

5. Reviewing 'THE LORD'S PRAYER', what is your first impression of the 'Lord's Prayer' itself? Perhaps if you were to imagine yourself as a listening follower of Jesus, what do you think your reaction would be after Jesus gave the prayer?
6. How do you think Jesus expected us to use the prayer? One way you might be familiar with is to recite it together in a church worship setting. Was this the only way Jesus had in mind? What do you think he had in mind?
7. Some ancient manuscripts say "Deliver us from evil" whilst others say "Deliver us from the Evil One." Does this difference really matter? Explain your answer.
8. Likewise, two sets of ancient manuscripts differ as to ending. One group adds "For Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever." It is possible that Jesus turned Chronicles 24:11 into an affirmation at the end of his pattern prayer. It is possible Matthew or someone else added it at a later time. It is also possible that someone else present heard the Lord say it and added it to Matthew's gospel record. Does it matter – and what are your comments?

## 42 REFERENCES TO THE FATHER IN MATTHEW

- 5:16 and praise your FATHER in heaven  
5:45 that you may be sons of your FATHER in heaven  
5:48 therefore, as your heavenly FATHER is perfect  
6:1 you will have no reward from your FATHER  
6:4 Then your FATHER, who sees what is done  
6:6 close the door, and pray to your FATHER  
6:6 Then your FATHER, who sees what is done  
6:8 for your FATHER knows what you need  
**6:9 "Our FATHER in heaven" Study 2**  
6:14 your heavenly FATHER will also forgive you.  
6:15 your FATHER will not forgive your sins.  
6:18 but only to your FATHER, who is unseen;  
6:18 and your FATHER, who sees what is done  
6:26 and yet your heavenly FATHER feeds them  
6:32 your heavenly FATHER knows that you need  
7:11 how much more will your FATHER in heaven give  
7:21 the will of my FATHER who is in heaven  
10:20 the Spirit of your FATHER speaking through you  
10:29 the ground apart from the will of your FATHER  
10:32 I will also acknowledge him before my FATHER  
10:33 I will disown him before my FATHER in heaven  
11:25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise you FATHER  
11:26 Yes, FATHER, for this was your good pleasure  
11:27 committed to me by my FATHER  
11:27 no one knows the FATHER except the Son and

12:50 does the will of my FATHER in heaven is my brother and sister  
 13:43 like the sun in the kingdom of their FATHER  
 15:13 that my heavenly FATHER has not planted will  
 16:17 but by my FATHER in heaven  
 18:10 in heaven always see the face of my FATHER  
 18:14 in the same way your FATHER in heaven is  
 18:19 it will be done for you by my FATHER in heaven  
 18:35 This is how my heavenly FATHER will treat each  
 20:23 for whom they have been prepared by my FATHER  
 23:9 for you have one FATHER and he is in heaven  
 24:36 nor the Son, but only the FATHER  
 25:34 Come, you who are blessed by my FATHER  
 26:39 My FATHER, if it is possible, may this cup be  
 26:42 My FATHER, if it is not possible for this cup to  
 26:53 Do you think I cannot call on my FATHER  
**28:19 the FATHER and of the Son and of the HOLY SPIRIT Study 7**

### 3 REFERENCES TO THE FATHER IN MARK

11:25 so that your FATHER in heaven may forgive you  
 13:32 nor the Son, but only the FATHER  
 14:36 “FATHER”, he said,” everything is possible for you”

### 20 REFERENCES TO THE FATHER IN LUKE

[2:49 “Did you not know that I must be about my FATHER’s business **Study 1(end)]**  
 6:36 Be merciful, just as your FATHER is merciful  
 9:26 the glory of the FATHER and of the holy angels  
 10:21 “I praise you, FATHER, Lord of heaven and earth  
 10:21 Yes, FATHER, for this was your good pleasure  
 10:22 committed to me by my FATHER,  
 10:22 No one knows who the Son is except the FATHER  
 10:22 no one knows who the FATHER is except the Son  
 11:2 “FATHER, hallowed be your name,  
 11:13 how much more will your FATHER in heaven give  
 12:30 and your FATHER knows that you need them.  
 12:32 for your FATHER has been pleased to give you  
**15:12** the younger one said to his father, “Father...

This parable (Luke 15:11-32) is the subject of our Introductory Study on the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While there are no direct references to the heavenly Father, Jesus gave the parable to illustrate the work of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

22:29 just as my FATHER conferred one on me  
 22:42 “FATHER, if you are willing, take this cup  
**23:42 Jesus said, “FATHER, forgive them, Study 6**  
**23:46 Jesus called out with a loud voice, “FATHER, into Thy hands....” Study 6 (end)**  
 24:49 to send you what my FATHER has promised

**Philip said: ‘SHOW US THE FATHER’****Reading: John 14:1-21 PHILIP WANTS TO SEE THE FATHER***Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” John 14:8. NIV*

Within the brief compass of twenty-one verses ‘Father’s’ or ‘Father’ is mentioned sixteen times. In all, John mentions the Father one hundred and sixteen times.

**MY FATHER’S HOUSE 1-4**

The close followers of Jesus had just received shattering news. Jesus was going to be with them just “a little longer” (John 13:33). He was going to go where they couldn’t come. In chapter 14 Jesus gives the antidote for their troubled hearts. “Trust in God. Trust also in me.” – he says. Jesus then makes a most comforting remark: **“In my Father’s house are many rooms”** This is a clear reference to where God lives – heaven. And it is an equally clear declaration that there is space enough for us to go and live there also.

**I AM THE WAY TO THE FATHER 5-7**

Thomas was an open and honest man and quickly expressed his view, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going so how can we know the way?” After declaring the he was the “way”, the “truth” and the “life” Jesus said, **“No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me you would know my Father as well.”** Jesus was trying to expand their understanding of who he was. The disciples had seen him in the flesh and had come to the conclusion that he was certainly someone special with a close relationship with God. Jesus was now saying that if they “really knew” him they would “know” the Father as well. Jesus was not saying that they did not know God in a close, intimate, worshipful way – for the disciples would be true and sincere worshippers of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jesus was saying that if the disciples could understand that he, Jesus, was in a unique and special relationship with the Father – they would also have an insight into what the Father was like. In short, Jesus was saying that both he and the Father were closely related. There was an intimate connection between them.

**THE ONE WHO HAS SEEN ME HAS SEEN THE FATHER 8-11**

“The words I say to you are not just my own, rather **it is the Father living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.**” The words of Jesus were not just the words of a great human mind. Nor were they the words of a prophet who had the gift of hearing directly from God. The words of Jesus were because the Father was living in him and he was living in the Father – an intimate union. The words of Jesus were the expression of that intimate union. They were God’s words. Within a short time the disciples would come to fully realise that Jesus was God.

**I AM GOING TO THE FATHER 12-14**

The “greater things” of verse 12 were dependent upon Jesus **“going to the Father”** and the Holy Spirit being sent. These “greater things” would be done in the power of the Holy Spirit. (John 14:16-17 and 15:26). He promises that he will do what the disciples ask in his name **“so that the Son may bring glory to the Father”**.

What does “I will do whatever you ask in my name” mean? It is not sufficient to simply pray a prayer “in the name of Jesus”. Behind anyone’s name is the person and all that that person is and stands for. In the case of Jesus, he is the unique Son of God with awesome power and a personal character that is the fullest expression of all good attributes anyone can possess. To pray “in the name of Jesus” means to so know Jesus, to be so intimately close to him, that the prayer knows what his thoughts and will on any given matter is. To pray with such knowledge means that the Lord Jesus Christ will be in agreement with the content of the prayer. As the note in my ‘Spirit Filled Life Bible’ (NKJV) says: ‘Prayer offered in the **name** of Jesus is in accord with His revealed nature and purpose and has the full weight of His authority behind it.’

And what are these “greater things”? They were not works that were greater in value or significance than the works of Jesus. They would be greater in scope and in number.

1. On earth Jesus was limited to a small geographical area and limited by a few years.
2. After his death, resurrection and Pentecost, the ministry of Jesus continued under the power of the Holy Spirit through a rapidly expanding group of new Christians.

#### I WILL ASK THE FATHER WHO WILL GIVE YOU ANOTHER COUNSELOR 15-18

This is an illuminating statement! “**I will ask the Father**” is not that the Father needed to have a request by Jesus, but that the Father and the Son are so much in harmony that they are always in agreement. Yet it does also indicate that Jesus is far more than any chosen “created being” or “special angel” that some deviants suggest. Jesus is God and is equal with God the Father. He can say, “I will ask the Father who will be in agreement with me.” This statement is very affirming of the Christian claim that Jesus is God.

The word ‘another’ (as in “another counsellor/helper”) is very interesting. ‘*allos*’ (Gk.) means another of the same kind. Jesus was saying: “One besides me and in addition to me but one just like me. He will do in my absence what I would do if I were physically present with you.” The Spirit’s coming assures continuity with what Jesus did and taught.

[This paragraph from the ‘Spirit Filled Life Bible’ note ‘Word wealth’ for John 14:16.]

I love the statement of Jesus in verse 18. “I will not leave you orphans (*Orphanos* Gk.)” It is such a caring statement by the Lord and expresses the love in his heart for them.

#### I AM IN MY FATHER AND YOU WILL BE LOVED BY US BOTH 19-21

The part of verse 21 is: “Whoever loves me **will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and manifest to him.**” The word ‘manifest’ (*emphanidzoe*) means “to cause to shine” – to appear, come to view, reveal, exhibit, make visible, present oneself to the sight of another, be conspicuous, to declare or make known. It is Jesus revealing himself.

And the love of the Father for us cannot be separated from the love of the Son for us.

## DISCUSSION POINTS

9. Why do you think John in his Gospel mentions the Fatherhood of God nearly twice as many times as the other three Gospel writers put together (116 to 65)?
10. In our passage under study (John 14:1-21), Jesus refers to “**My Father**” five times. The remaining times are “**The Father**” or, as in verse 10, “**The Father in me**”. He doesn’t actually say to the disciples “Your Father”. What is your understanding of this seeming differentiation by Jesus?
11. There is no doubt that verse 21 expresses the fact that both the Father and the Son have love for the disciples – and for us too who believe. Can you find anything in Chapter 14 to indicate that the Holy Spirit loves us too?
12. We, in our generation, have not had the privilege of knowing and walking with Jesus in the flesh. Nevertheless, we can accept the promise of the Holy Spirit and experience the Holy Spirit’s presence with us as the one sent in Jesus’ place. What is your understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in your life as the substitute for Jesus?
13. In verses 15 Jesus says, “If you love me, keep my commandments” and in verse 21 he says, “He who has my commandments and keeps them loves me.” What is your understanding of “commandments” (NKJV) or “commands” (as the NIV puts it)? What is the relationship between love and Jesus “commands”?

## 112 REFERENCES TO THE FATHER IN JOHN

### **1:14 the One and Only, who came from the FATHER**

### **Study 1**

- 3:35 the FATHER loves the Son and has placed
- 4:21 when you will worship the FATHER neither
- 4:23 the true worshippers will worship the FATHER
- 4:23 the kind of worshippers the FATHER seeks
- 5:17 My FATHER is always at his work
- 5:18 but he was even calling God his own FATHER
- 5:19 he can only do what he sees his FATHER doing
- 5:19 whatever the FATHER does the Son does also
- 5:20 FATHER loves the Son and shows him all he does
- 5:21 as the FATHER raises the dead and gives them life
- 5:22 moreover, the FATHER judges no one
- 5:23 the Son, just as they honour the FATHER
- 5:23 not honour the Son, does not honour the FATHER
- 5:26 for as the FATHER has life in himself
- 5:36 For the very work that the FATHER has given me
- 5:36 testifies that the FATHER has sent me
- 5:37 the FATHER who sent me has himself testified
- 5:45 do not think I will accuse you before the FATHER
- 6:27 the FATHER has placed his seal of approval
- 6:32 but it is my FATHER who gives you the true bread
- 6:37 all that the FATHER gives me will come to me
- 6:44 to me unless the FATHER who sent me draws him.
- 6:46 the FATHER except the one who is from God.

6:46 only he has seen the FATHER.  
6:57 the living FATHER sent me and I live because  
6:65 to me unless the FATHER has enabled him.  
8:16 I stand with the FATHER, who sent me.  
8:18 my other witness is the FATHER, who sent me.  
8:19 Then they asked him, "Where is your father?" "You do not know me or my FATHER," you  
would know my FATHER also.  
8:27 he was telling them about his FATHER.  
8:41-2 "The only FATHER we have is God himself." Jesus said to them, "If God were your FATHER  
8:49 "but I honour my FATHER and you dishonour me."  
8:54 My FATHER, whom you claim as your God,  
10:15 as the FATHER knows me  
10:15 and I know the FATHER-  
10:17 The reason my FATHER loves me is that I lay  
10:18 This command I received from my FATHER."  
10:29 My FATHER, who has given them to me,  
10:30 I and the FATHER are one."  
10:32 "I have shown you many great miracles from the FATHER.  
10:36 what about the one whom the FATHER set apart  
10:37 not believe me unless I do what my FATHER does  
10:38 and understand that the FATHER is in me.  
10:38 and I in the FATHER."  
10:41 Then Jesus looked up and said, "FATHER,  
12:26 My FATHER will honour the one who serves me.  
12:27 'FATHER, save me from this hour'?  
12:28 FATHER, glorify your name!"  
12:50 the FATHER has told me to say."  
13:3 the FATHER had put all things under his power,  
**14:6 No one comes to the FATHER except through me.**  
**14:7 you would know my FATHER as well.**  
**14:8 show us the FATHER and that will be enough.**  
**14:9 Anyone who has seen me has seen the FATHER.**  
**14:9 How can you say, 'Show us the FATHER'?**  
**14:10 Don't you believe that I am in the FATHER,**  
**14:10 and that the FATHER is in me?**  
**14:10 Rather, it is the FATHER living in me,**  
**14:11 that I am in the FATHER**  
**14:11 that I am in the FATHER**  
**14:11 and the FATHER is in me;**  
**14:12 because I am going to the FATHER,**  
**14:16 And I will ask the FATHER, and he will give you**  
**14:20 that day you will realise that I am in my FATHER,**  
**14:21 He who loves me will be loved by my FATHER,**  
14:23 My FATHER will love him,  
14:24 *they belong to* the FATHER who sent me.  
**14:26 whom the FATHER will send in my name,**  
**14:28 be glad that I am going to the FATHER,**  
**14:28 for the FATHER is greater than I.**

### Study 3

### Study 4

**14:31 the world must learn that I love the FATHER and**

**14:31 I do exactly what my FATHER has commanded me.**

15:1 and my FATHER is the gardener.

15:9 the FATHER has loved me, so I have loved you.

15:15 from my FATHER I have made known to you.

15:16 Then the FATHER will give you whatever you ask.

15:23 He who hates me hates my FATHER as well.

15:24 and yet they have hated both me and my FATHER.

15:26 whom I will send to you from the FATHER,

**15:26 the Spirit of truth who goes out from the FATHER,**

**Study 4**

16:3 because they have not known the FATHER or me.

16:10 because I am going to the FATHER,

16:15 All that belongs to the FATHER is mine,

16:17 and 'Because I am going to the FATHER'?"

16:23 my FATHER will give you whatever you ask

16:25 but will tell you plainly about my FATHER,

16:26 I am not saying that I will ask the FATHER

16:27 the FATHER himself loves you

16:28 I came from the FATHER and entered the world;

16:28 the world and going back to the FATHER."

16:32 Yet I am not alone, for my FATHER is with me.

**17:1 "FATHER, the time has come.**

**Study 5**

**17:5 now, FATHER, glorify me in your presence with**

**17:11 Holy FATHER, protect them by the power**

**17:21 FATHER, just as you are in me and I am in you.**

**17:24 "FATHER, I want those you have given me to be**

**17:25 "Righteous FATHER, though the world does**

18:11 not drink the cup the FATHER has given me?"

20:17 for I have not yet returned to the FATHER.

20:17 'I am returning to my FATHER

20:17 and your FATHER,

20:21 As the FATHER has sent me, I am sending you."

Note: There are more mentions of "The Father" in John 14 than in any other chapter in the Bible – and all by Jesus.

## THE FATHER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

***“But the Counsellor, THE HOLY SPIRIT, whom THE FATHER will send in MY NAME, will teach you all things.”*** John 14:26 NIV

The way the Trinity weaves its path throughout the New Testament is almost subtle. The manner in which the three personages of God declare their relationship with one another and their entity as a unity is so unobtrusive. In the gospels, especially in John’s, Jesus is clear, consistent and constant in speaking of his relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit and of the Father’s and the Holy Spirit’s relationship with each other. Jesus makes us part of that harmonious relationship (“*I will ask the Father and He will give you another Counsellor (the Holy Spirit).”)* We worship a triune-God in glorious unity.

### JESUS MENTIONS HIS FATHER

John in his gospel records much of what Jesus said that is not recorded in the other three gospels. John wrote somewhat later than the other three and his purpose is not to give a chronological account of happenings. Rather, he sought to reveal the heart of Jesus and to express why Jesus came down to earth from the Father. Accordingly, he reveals more about the way Jesus thought and spoke about the Father and the Holy Spirit. Let us do a comparison between the four gospel records – remembering that Matthew, Mark and Luke had a different purpose to their records. [For a full list of references you may wish to look up “Father” and “Father’s” in, say, Strongs NIV concordance.]

	<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Mark</b>	<b>Luke</b>	<b>John</b>
Mentions of “FATHER”	42	3	20	112
Mentions of “FATHER’s”	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>11</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>123</b>

### HIS EMPHASIS ON RELATIONSHIP

Jesus evidences the pure and indiscriminating love of God in the way he expresses his relationship with his heavenly Father, the Holy Spirit and with us.

**Reading:     John 15:26-16:16     THE SPIRIT WILL REVEAL IT TO YOU (v15)**

**15:26** The name ‘Counsellor’ is given to the Holy Spirit. The title occurs only five times in the New Testament being John 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7 and Romans 11:34 (where it is a question by as to “who has been God’s counsellor – or source of information). Here follows the references to the Holy Spirit be called Counsellor:

- John 14:16    “I will ask the Father and he will give you another Counsellor...”
- John 14:26    “*But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.*
- John 15:26    “*When the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me.*”
- John 16:7     “*I tell you the truth. It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counsellor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*”

The word “Counsellor” is *parakletos*. We get parallel from this Greek word. In the biblical sense it is “one who comes alongside us and travels along the same path (parallel) to us – helping us along the

way”. *Parakletos* was widely used in a legal sense to denote someone who came along and acted “for the defence”. But it was also widely used to describe someone who simply came alongside to help a friend in trouble with the law. The name fits the Holy Spirit perfectly – as one who comes alongside, but also in us.

**16:3** The title “the Father”. Please refer to John 5:17 where Jesus, in the company of Jewish leaders, refers to the Father as “my Father”. The Jews never referred to God as “My Father”, regarding the term as too intimate. They might have used “Our Father” or – in prayer – “My Father”. As has occurred in many previous verses, Jesus links himself with the Father. In this verse, Jesus states the ignorance of false leaders of God’s flock.

**16:10** *“I am going to the Father where you can see me no longer”*. There has been a relationship between the disciples and Jesus in a human way. They will “see” him no longer. But he is teaching that they will have the presence of the Holy Spirit with them. They won’t be able to see the Holy Spirit either, even when he comes. But they will experience the presence, the person and the power of the Holy Spirit – the Counsellor.

**16:15** *“All that belongs to the Father is mine.”* The NIV Bible notes say, “The three Persons are closely related.” This is the sum of it. All three are one God and thus own all. For the life of me, I cannot understand how certain (“Christian”) groups, deviations from the Christian faith, can say that only the Father is God; that Jesus is created; and that the Holy Spirit is simply God’s impersonal force. The New Testament affirms the Trinity. The verse goes on: *“The Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”* Here we have the outcome of the relationship between the three persons of the Trinity and us. The Father owns everything; Everything the Father owns belongs also to the Son. The Holy Spirit will share of that ownership of magnitude whatever is appropriate to share with believers. What an inheritance we have! The inference is that the Holy Spirit, too, is a partner in the ownership of all that belongs to the Father and the Son.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

14. Why do you think John records the references by Jesus to his “Father” more than any other gospel writer?
15. How do you explain why we humans feel deeply for the welfare of those closest to us and yet not with the same depth of feeling over a distant friend or relative?
16. Explain how the Lord Jesus Christ differs from us in this matter?
17. Read John chapters 15 and 16 and note the frequency of the title “Father”. Explain what this teaches us?
18. Explain the Scripture passage John 16:7-11 in terms of the stated work of the Holy Spirit as the one who has a threefold task – dealing with (see verse 9): (1) Sin (2) righteousness and (3) judgement.
19. What, precisely, belongs to the Father (verse 16:14)?

**Reading:     John 16:17-33           WHERE GRIEF TURNS TO JOY**

Read and study the above Scripture portion. Again, identify those occasions where Jesus refers to the Father and the Holy Spirit and reflect upon how harmoniously Father, Son and Holy Spirit are lovingly portrayed in this account by John.

## JESUS PRAYS TO THE FATHER

There are two prayers we call “The Lord’s Prayer” in the gospels. The first, commonly known as “The Lord’s Prayer”, is the one Jesus taught his disciples. It is found in Matthew 6:9-13 and is the subject of our Study 2. The second, is the prayer Jesus himself prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane as he prepared himself for that terrible physical and spiritual ordeal on the cross. The first is an example prayer our Lord taught his followers. The second is our Lord’s intimate and anguished communication with his heavenly Father. It is the second of "The Lord's Prayer" that we will be “looking at” now.

I hesitated to use the term “looking at” – but that is better than “studying”. May I explain. Many years ago I sat listening to a godly pastor preach. The Rev. Frank England had been a missionary in China and after the communists took over that land in 1949 he and his wife came to New Zealand to take up positions in the New Zealand Bible College – where I began my theological training. Mr England lectured us students and even though I do not recall the words he spoke in lectures I do recall seeing a man who walked closely with Jesus. A large, loving and gentle man, he was so sensitive to the mind, will and character of God and one of the closest replicas of Jesus Christ I can imagine.

What I have outlined about Mr. England is to pass on some words he said once that have etched themselves into my heart and soul. On one occasion he stood up, and turning the Scriptures to John 17 he said (as closely as I can remember) this:

**“John 17. We are on holy ground. Here we take off our shoes as we overhear our Lord at prayer – pouring out his heart to his Father. This is the one portion of the sacred Scriptures that I cannot expound. I cannot take apart, verse by verse, the Lord’s impassioned cry to his heavenly Father for help. Some may be able, but I cannot. So I am going to read our Lord’s prayer and then speak on the subject of communing with our God with sincerity and holiness.”**

Again, I forget what he said, but I do remember his honouring of our Lord in this manner. So perhaps you will understand my hesitancy in approaching John Chapter 17. May you, also, approach this study, as I do, seeking to allow our Lord’s prayer to increase holiness in us to God’s glory. So let us now approach the prayer of Jesus with our shoes removed.

**Reading:      John 17:1-26                  JESUS PRAYS TO HIS FATHER IN HEAVEN**

*After Jesus said this, he looked towards heaven and prayed:*

## JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF

Verses 1-5

**“FATHER, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.”** “Father” is used regularly in Jesus’ prayers, six times here. “The time has come” - The exact time is not said, as if Father and Son already know. “glorify your son” - Strengthen and enable him to fulfil his task of dying for souls.

**“For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life.”** The Son has been given authority over all (Mt.28:18). This includes eternal life to believers.

***“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.”*** Jesus has revealed the Father, has exposed sin, has trained the Twelve Disciples, and (looking ahead as if it is already accomplished) has died on the cross, been raised from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the Father and seen the Holy Spirit sent. “It is finished!”

***“And now, FATHER, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”*** Jesus is looking forward to the glorious heavenly state – the dwelling place he once enjoyed with the Father. He anticipates that when he returns to heaven he will be back in a most wonderful and permanent place. He had experienced this place even before the “world began”. In other words, - before time. The word “world” occurs 18 times in this prayer of Jesus. There is anticipation, a confidence, in this statement.

## JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES

Verses 6-19

***“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they have accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me”.***

Accepting the “words” of Jesus does not simply mean obedience to individual commands or teachings, but to their acceptance of the message and mission of Jesus. They believed “the man and his message” together.

***I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you.”***

So he prays for them. The disciples had recognised the revelation of the truth in Jesus Christ as being of God. So Jesus was now able to leave them. But he needed to pray for them because they were now going to represent the one who had represented God. (“I am coming to you, but they are still in the world”. Because of this he prays for them. (“All I have is yours, all you have is mine, these disciples are yours as well as mine Father, so please protect them. I have protected them. As I leave them, will you protect them.”)

***“HOLY FATHER, protect them by the power of your name - the name you gave me – so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture (Psalm 41:9) would be fulfilled. I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world even as I am not of it. Sanctify them (set apart for holy purposes) by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify (set apart) myself that they too may be truly sanctified.”***

To be sent into the world, as Jesus was sent into the world, is the highest honour that God can bestow upon us. The word “sanctify” means to be set apart for a holy purpose. Jesus did not need to be made holy – but as a holy One, He was to be set aside for a very special purpose. Jesus is praying to the Father

that his disciples may be set aside to fulfil a very special, honoured and holy calling – to do his work in his absence. This probably includes the privilege of serving and suffering, just as the Father bestowed this commission upon the Son. When we fulfil our commission with a holy purpose, we will certainly suffer in the world. But as Jesus prayed, it should bring us into greater unity.

## JESUS PRAYS FOR ALL BELIEVERS

Verses 20-26

***“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, FATHER, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”***

The disciples were already in a measure of unity. Jesus knew that following the very special group that were friends, followers and eyewitnesses of Jesus, later disciples would need to pursue and experience unity. Jesus uses the analogy of the oneness he experiences with the Father – a divine mystery we cannot fully comprehend. Nevertheless, we know enough to recognise that there can and should be a special harmony between believers.

***“FATHER, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”*** It is “because you loved me” says Jesus. How great an amount rests upon loving a person.

***“RIGHTEOUS FATHER, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*** Jesus prayed and worked tirelessly to increase the love of God in believers. Jesus knew the reality and power of the love of the Father for him and asked that this love warm the lives of those who were now so bound up with his life.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

20. Comment on the reverent way Jesus addresses the Father (“Father” “Holy Father” “Righteous Father” ).
21. Jesus prayed that his followers would be “one” with each other. What does Jesus mean by this? Where does this oneness lead to and why is it so important?

**“FATHER, FORGIVE THEM...”**

We have arrived at the most sacred day in all history. The day in which Jesus was crucified on the cross. We also have the most sacred privilege of hearing his final words before he died. Many people, when they are preparing for death, write what is called a WILL. These are the wishes of the person that take effect after he or she has died. A Will can only deal with what belongs to the person who makes the Will. It cannot address anything the benefactor has not owned in life. In our Study 4 we read the Scripture John 16:15 that said: *“All that belongs to the Father is mine. ...the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you.”* And in Study 5 we read in John 17:10 the words of Jesus when he prayed to the Father: *“All I have is yours and all you have is mine.”* You will recall that I said that we have a most wonderful provision here. If we speak in terms of a “Will”, we have a most generous Benefactor, and we are the most blessed of beneficiaries. Out of everything in this physical universe we are in and out of God’s vast spiritual resources, the Holy Spirit will share what we need from that. Not what we want – but what God sees and decides is best for us. Isn’t that wonderful?

We arrive, in this study, at the cross. On that cross Jesus spoke his last Will and testament. It was painful to speak in the position of excruciating torture the cross produced. For the person on the cross it meant pushing up with nail-pierced feet to take a breath sufficient for uttering a brief comment. Seven times Jesus spoke on the cross and his words have been recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Not all seven are in each gospel but between the four we have seven statements by Jesus. But first, an introduction in which Pilate speaks:

**Reading: John 19:17-22 “WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN I HAVE WRITTEN”**

*Carrying his own cross, he went out to the Place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called ‘Golgotha’). Here they crucified him, and with him two others – one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.” Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”*

**Reading: Luke 23:32-34 “FATHER, FORGIVE THEM...”**

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” are seemingly directed towards those who crucified him – the Roman Soldiers. Did Jesus utter these words as the soldiers drove them into his flesh – as they were impaling him on that rough cross? It could well be, for these were the first of the ‘Seven Sayings’ recorded for us. If we read the crucifixion story and miss out the part about the written notice Pilate attached, the Scripture says that Jesus was crucified, along with two criminals, and then records the words of Jesus ‘Father, forgive them...’ Yet, surely they have a wider application. Isaiah 53:12 says: *“He bore the sins of many and prayed for those who sinned.”* The whole of Isaiah 53 refers to Jesus Christ. It is the most graphic account we have in the Old Testament of the suffering of Jesus Christ. Isaiah 53:12 explicitly states that Jesus ‘bore the sins of many’ and ‘prayed for those who sinned’. These two actions surely go together. On the cross the first thing Jesus did was to pray forgiveness for those who knew no better and within a short time died and ‘bore the sins of many’.

No, the words were not only for the Roman soldiers who were merely the instruments acting for the executors, it was also certainly for the Jews who initiated the trial and committal to death. It was also for every human being in the world, past present and future. Again, to quote Isaiah (53:6): ***“All we like sheep have gone astray and the Lord has laid on him (Jesus) the iniquity (sin) of us all.”*** (NKJV). When Jesus prayed: “Father, forgive them, for they do not understand what they are doing” he was praying in harmony with what he had taught publicly. In Matthew 5:44 we read of Jesus saying: ***“But I say to you, love your enemies. Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”*** When Jesus prayed: “Father, forgive them, for they do not understand what they are doing” he was perfectly demonstrating the new law of love that should become planted in every believer born of God’s Holy Spirit. In Acts 7:59-60 we read: ***And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not charge them with this sin.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep (died).*** (NKJV)

That word “forgive.” Can we plumb its depths? What a multitude of questions result from trying to understand it. When Jesus said, “forgive” he was going beyond the soldiers, the Jewish leaders who contrived his arrest, trial and conviction. Jesus forgave whilst receiving the greatest miscarriage of justice ever perpetrated.

22. Jesus asked his heavenly Father to “forgive” those who acted against him. Thus we assume that the Father was in harmony and agreement with the Son and forgave those whom the Son felt needed to experience forgiveness. Who then, do you think, were the recipients of that forgiveness?
23. What do you think was the nature of the forgiveness? Putting it another way, what changed? If the Father had not forgiven what would have been the situation?
24. Did the forgiveness Jesus prayed for cover Judas Iscariot? In John 17:12 Jesus prays: *“None of them is lost except...(Judas)”*. Was Judas so lost that the forgiveness Jesus asked of the Father was not available to Judas? Is there a point at which the forgiveness of God stops? Or is there another meaning for the word “lost” such as “lost to the cause” rather than “lost to salvation” and destined for hell? So how far does the forgiveness Jesus asked of the Father go? Can we say that there is nobody on earth who has sinned so grievously that there is no forgiveness available? Discuss forgiveness and the related subject of repentance.

**Reading: Luke 23:39-43      “TODAY YOU WILL BE WITH ME...”**

Jesus was crucified between two criminals. Jesus Christ, by his death on the cross, has forever divided the human race between two eternities. The criminals represent those two eternities. One great part of humanity will say, “Remember me” and to them Jesus will respond, “There is room in my Father’s and my heavenly home for you.” The other great part of humanity will “hurl insults” and be closed to the salvation offered by Jesus Christ.

What a wonderful reply the representative of receptive humanity gave to the other. “Don’t you fear God? We deserve our punishment, but this man has done nothing wrong.” He saw innocence and he declared it. This robber was one of the many ‘revolutionists’ (see John 10:8 and 18:40), one of those bands of irregulars who harassed the Roman legions as they marched along the depressions of Galilee, swooping down from the hills on their rear, doing as much damage as possible and then scattering. It was common for crucified men to harangue their executioners so the silence of Jesus amid the mob,

priests, soldiers, and fellow-sufferers would have been a powerful witness. Ancient records tell us that this robber was named Dysmas who had been caught and condemned to the cross. How did he come to think of Jesus as a king? Was he present at the trial waiting his turn? Did he see the inscription on the cross, “THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS”? What we do know is that he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom.” Jesus gave the highest word of comfort and assurance possible. “I tell you the truth. Today – you will be with me in paradise.”

**Reading:     John 19:25-27           “DEAR WOMAN, HERE IS YOUR SON...”**

Just three verses tucked in John’s gospel – but very meaningful to John who, in his gospel, referred to himself as the “one whom Jesus loved” (13:23,19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 21.20). Sometime after Jesus spoke to the revolutionist on the cross, Jesus speaks to his mother and to John. Perhaps aware of the tremendous anguish of heart by the woman who brought him into this earthly world, Jesus uses a tender expression of love when he says “dear woman” . His tender concern for Mary even in the middle of His own physical agony reveals his deep compassion for all of us in the human race.

We may wonder why John was chosen to look after the earthly mother of Jesus. Perhaps none of Mary’s other sons were there (Matthew 12:46, Mark 3:41,Luke 8:19). John called himself “the disciple whom Jesus loved” not because only John was especially loved, but he was sensitively conscious of the love the Lord directed at him. He accepted and returned that love and would be loyal to Jesus totally. The lesson for us to realise that Jesus loves each one of us intensely and individually – even amidst the worst situations.

Mary was standing in a brutal scene that would have filled her heart with anguish and terror. There were four women we read of. There is Mary the mother of Jesus; his mother’s sister who is not named but possibly Salome the mother of the gospel writer John (See Matthew 27:56; Mark 10:35; 15:40); the wife of Cleophas (KJV or Cleopas TLB or Clopas NIV etc. and see Luke 24:18); and Mary Magdalene. Cleopas and his wife were probably the Emmaus Road travellers Jesus appeared to (Luke 24:18.) The name Cleopas is only here and in John 19:25. Most of these women were related in some way to the twelve disciples and were among the loyal followers of Jesus. The moment Jesus said to John “your mother”, John removed Mary from the scene at once and took her to his home in Jerusalem. We, too, need to be in tune with the mind and will of Jesus.

**Reading:     Mark 15:33-35           “MY GOD, MY GOD...”**

***“MY GOD, MY GOD, - WHY HAVE YOU ABANDONED ME?”*** This heart-cry from the Son of God is the cry of all eternity. Upon this anguished cry hangs the destiny of the whole human race. It split the heavens, it split the human race into two, it split Christ’s words from the cross into two and it seemed to announce a split between Father and Son.

God is absolute holiness and purity and cannot sin or be tainted by sin. But when God the Father laid the sin of the world upon Jesus – fellowship was broken for the first time in eternity. No part of God had ever experience sin so when Jesus the Christ received all sin, he encountered something he had never before encountered. There came an impenetrable cloud between him and his heavenly Father. He was unable to address God the Father as “Father” – as he had done at the beginning with “Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” In utter rejection he called out, “My God, My God, why have you left me?” This rejection, abandonment lasted for a period we do not know. When the sin was carried (Isaiah 53:4) and the divine objective achieved there was intimate fellowship once more between the Father and the Son. The opening word of Jesus was, “Father, forgive them...” The closing

word was, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” Right in the centre of the seven words was “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me.” Not simply the centre of a group of words from the cross – but centre of the eternal and divine will of God in having Jesus, the lamb of God, sacrificed for humanity’s sin, to make the way open for the repenting sinner to claim forgiveness.

**Reading:     John 19:28-29            “I AM THIRSTY.”**

All four gospels give but a few verses each to record the period from “My God, My God” to the moment Jesus commits his earthly spirit to the Father. John has but three verses to describe the final moment of Jesus on the cross. All the previous sufferings had made him dry. In his physical being, in his humanity, he was suffering thirst. Psalm 22:15 says, “My tongue cleaves to my jaws and in my thirst they gave me vinegar.” Psalm 22 is considered the most explicit predictive passage in the Old Testament of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. A mixture of vinegar and water was the common drink of Roman Soldiers and perhaps the vessel was sitting their for their use. The soldiers filled a sponge with the mixture and putting it on a long stick from the hyssop tree poked it up to Jesus. Before he was crucified, Jesus had been offered (Matthew 27:34) a pain-deadening mixture but, after tasting it, refused it for he was not going to lessen his physical ability to receive the full, conscious weight of our sin. On this occasion, however, he could ask for a drink of watery vinegar, which would not lessen pain, but would moisten a parched throat.

**Reading:     John 19:30a            “IT IS FINISHED.”**

The work Jesus came to do was fully completed. He had discharged perfectly the Father’s purpose and he could leave the scene of his earthly struggle.

**Reading:     Luke 23:46                “FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS...”**

Luke 23:46 says Jesus called out with a loud voice (shouted) “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” Psalm 31:5 contains this cry of Jesus. (See verses 10,13,22 also) What a triumphant cry of victory it was too. “IT IS FINISHED! I’M COMING HOME.”

## “FATHER, SON, AND HOLY SPIRIT”

In our last study, we were at the pivotal point in all history. Or perhaps we could say, “We were at the pivotal point in all of **His-story**.” For truly history is “His-story”. The four gospels continue to tell “His story” until Jesus ascends to his Father from the Mount of Olives. After Jesus has risen from the dead, and appears to people, he makes mention of his heavenly Father four important times. Here are the four mentions:

### **FIRST:            WHEN JESUS APPEARS TO MARY OUTSIDE THE TOMB**

#### **John 20:11-17**

*But Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb (12) and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus’ body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. (13) They asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” “They have taken my Lord away,” she said, “and I don’t know where they have put him.” (14) At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise it was Jesus. (15) “Woman,” he said, “why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” (16) Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabboni!” (which means Teacher). (17) Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, **for I have not yet returned to the FATHER. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to my FATHER and your FATHER, to my God and your God.’**”*

This is the first appearance Jesus makes to anyone after he has risen from the dead. But I would like you to notice particularly what he said – and especially the mention of his “Father” and of his “God.” You will recall that on the cross he said these words:

- 1<sup>st</sup> saying:        “**Father**, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.”  
 4<sup>th</sup> saying:        “**My God, My God**, why have you abandoned me?”  
 7<sup>th</sup> saying:        “**Father**, into your hands I commit my spirit.”

The period Jesus spent on the cross began with his addressing the heavenly Father with the love and intimacy he had always experienced; his fourth (and central) saying reflected the abandonment he felt as he called on his ‘God’; the final saying revealed the resumption of the loving and intimate fellowship that Jesus had enjoyed from eternity past with the Father. So I am especially moved to note the way Jesus addresses God the Father at his first contact with those he loved on earth and came to save. Notice the way Jesus leads up to his major statement:

Firstly he says,            “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?”

A distraught Mary mistakes Jesus for the tomb and park attendant, and irrationally says she will collect the body of Jesus (without mentioning his name) and take him...where? And how did she possibly hope to carry him to wherever she imagined she would take him to? A compassionate and understanding Jesus replies:

Secondly,                “Mary.”

I think this is one of the most touching moments recorded in the entire Bible. He says her name and, of course, she responds instantly with a burst of recognition and joy. She had been facing another direction in her distress, but she whips around and falls at his feet in adoration, and holds his ankles tightly – or possibly hold him with an impulsive and happy ‘bear hug’. Can you imagine the turnaround in her emotions? Jesus then says:

Thirdly, “Do not hold on (cling to) to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am returning to **my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.**’”

That momentous sacrificial time Jesus spent on the cross where he moved from intimate fellowship (Father) to anguished separation (My God, My God) was brought together in one victorious statement as he spoke to Mary in his first appearance with:

‘I AM RETURNING TO MY FATHER AND YOUR FATHER, TO MY GOD AND YOUR GOD. Having overcome sin, there is intimacy and relationship with both ‘Father’ and ‘God’ as Jesus says “MY God.” And what is also important for us, he accords the same relationship of ‘belonging’, love and fellowship to those whom he came to save with the additional words: “...and your Father ...and your God.”

## **SECOND: WHEN JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES IN THE UPPER ROOM**

### **John 20:20**

*After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. (21) Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! **As the Father** has sent me, I am sending you.” And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. (23) If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”*

Again, Jesus is including the disciples (all believers) in his relationship with the Father. “As the Father has sent me (so) I am sending you.”

In verse 21 where Jesus said, “Peace be with you!” he is calming their happy but surprised and excited spirits. “Be at peace. Now listen quietly to what I have to say next.” He gives them their commission. It is linked with the commission Jesus came to earth – sent by the Father. Thus it is extremely important. “As the Father sent me, I am sending you.” The disciples have a task ahead. It is a very important task that is to be passed down through the years and generations to others. For this important task they (and we) will need the presence and power of God’s Holy Spirit. So Jesus imparts the Holy Spirit to the disciples. Some Bible expositors say that when Jesus breathed on the disciples it was a ‘promise’ of Pentecost to come. Not so. Jesus said, “receive” and the Greek word John uses is *lambano*, which means ‘receive’ or ‘take now’. What Jesus did was to recall the creation of man (Genesis 2:7) when man became a living soul in a spiritual sense. And Jesus here is bringing a change within the disciples by the Holy Spirit. It is not the empowering baptism and filling they received later at Pentecost but, nevertheless, it is a definite reception of the Holy Spirit in such a measure that commissions them and prepares them for the task ahead. Some have suggested this impartation of the Holy Spirit could be ‘new birth’ (being born again). It could be. But I note that in John 13:10 Jesus says that the disciples are ‘clean’ (except one) and in John 15:3 Jesus affirms that the disciples are ‘clean’ through the word that he has spoken to them. Also, in John 3 when Jesus said to Nicodemus “You must be born again” I feel this means that he could be ‘born again’ even before the cross. One thing I am sure about, the disciples in the upper room had been made clean through the word Jesus spoke to them and were dedicated believers in who he was. I am also sure that when they saw Jesus they obviously believed in his rising from the dead

and in the power of God. So, it seems to me that Jesus truly gave them an impartation of the Holy Spirit for the purpose of preparing them for a task of great and important magnitude ahead. If not ‘born again’ before, they were certainly ‘born again’ now. And more was to come on the Day of Pentecost. The outpouring then would change them forever. On this occasion, however, after he has imparted the Holy Spirit, Jesus tells them that they have the authority to declare, in the name of Jesus, that there is forgiveness for sin – and on what condition the sin will be forgiven.

### **THIRD:      WHEN HE GIVES HIS DISCIPLES THE GREAT COMMISSION**

As we will read shortly from Matthew’s gospel, Jesus makes ‘an appointment’ with his disciples to meet in Galilee that was the home of most of the followers of Jesus. It seems certain the word would have spread like ‘wildfire’ that Jesus had risen from the dead and when in 1 Corinthians 15:6 the Apostle Paul speaks of Jesus appearing to “more than five hundred at once” it is most probable that this moment in Galilee, before he ascended, is what Paul meant. Galilee would also be a place where such a large crowd could gather without being disturbed by the authorities. The account of that wonderful gathering is recorded by Matthew and Luke. The following is how it probably went:

#### **Matthew 28:16-18a**

*Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. (17) When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. (18) Then Jesus came to them and said,*

#### **Luke 24:44-47**

*“This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” (45) Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. (46) He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, (47) and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”*

#### **Matthew 28:18b-20**

*“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. (19) Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father** and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, (20) and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

### **FOURTH:      WHEN HE PROMISES THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

#### **Mark 16:16-18**

*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. (17) And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak with new tongues; (18) they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.”*

Of course, this does not mean that Christians are immune to danger and can go about chasing tiger snakes in Australia or drinking poison! However, I recall a true account of a Christian held in a prison in (when it was called) the Soviet Union. The prison guard said, “Your Bible says that you can drink poison and it won’t hurt you. Then drink this and prove Jesus can keep you alive.” The Christian chose to drink the poisoned liquid and was, indeed, preserved by God from harm – to the conversion of the

prison guard. Then again, Jesus is promising that he has the power to work miracles and healings through believers through human channels.

**Luke 24:47**

*“I am going to send you what **my Father** has promised; but stay in the city (of Jerusalem) until you have been clothed with power from on high.”*

And stay they did. Next study will be on what they were asked to wait for.

DISCUSSION POINTS

25. **Point One:** In your own words convey what you think Mary felt like before she recognised the risen Lord Jesus Christ.
26. Why do you think she wanted to take Jesus somewhere and where do you think she would have taken him if she could?
27. **Point two:** What do you think happened when Jesus breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”?
28. If Jesus had not breathed on them and given no impartation of the Holy Spirit what do you think would have been the ‘condition’ of the disciples?
29. **Point three:** Luke 24:45 has Jesus say, “This is what is written...” etc. What did he mean by this?
30. Why did Jesus say, “Baptize in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit?”
31. **Point four:** What does Jesus mean with, “Whoever believes and is baptised...”?
32. What does Jesus mean when he says, “.....But whoever does not believe is condemned.”?

## “WAIT FOR MY FATHER’S GIFT”

**Reading: Acts 1:1-4 “WAIT FOR THE GIFT MY FATHER PROMISED.”**

*(1) In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach (2) until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. (3) After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. (4) On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.” NIV*

Many years ago when I was in Bible College there was a fellow-student called Roy. There was also a student called Gillian. Both these two students had a reputation for dedication to the Lord that challenged the rest of us. After our year graduated, Roy courted and married Gillian. Roy and Gillian went to Thailand as missionaries to the Mao people in northern Thailand. I used to hear regularly from them by letter. By 1961 I had also graduated as a schoolteacher and was teaching in Northland, New Zealand. That evening I returned to the home where I stayed (for I was single then) and a letter awaited me on my dresser in the bedroom. I eagerly read the latest doings of Roy and Gillian. Gillian was pregnant and they were happily awaiting the birth of their first baby. That evening, as was the farming family’s habit and mine, we sat in the lounge with a coffee and listened to the 9:00pm radio news. The announcer said something like this: “A New Zealand missionary has been murdered in northern Thailand...”

In the rural area where I taught, a farming family had their home gutted by fire. A Christian family took them in. Out of gratitude, the influential husband who had lost his home asked all his neighbours to permit their children to attend a Sunday afternoon “Sunday School” (“Children’s Church”) hosted by the Christian man and his wife who had given them refuge at the time of their need. I was asked to lead that Sunday School. When Gillian gave birth to her little baby boy, she called him Murray Roy and she sent a photo of him to me. Our Sunday School “adopted” baby Murray Roy and for a long time we prayed for mother and baby. In time, I lost track of Gillian but heard that she had returned to her homeland of England. I also heard, perhaps twenty plus years later, that Murray Roy had grown up and had become a medical doctor. (Gillian had been a nurse).

Our Sunday School children came from homes where the Bible was not opened. We used a lesson book for children on the life of Jesus called “Things That Jesus Said And Did.” (Acts 1:1) by a Rev G. Harding Wood. So for two years our precious little people were fed on who Jesus was and what he taught. But they were also aware of another truth. Roy and Gillian had dedicated their lives to go to the Mao people and share the good news of Jesus Christ dying for them. Roy had left Gillian at home base, and had trekked into the tribal area of the Mao to bring them the love of God. Roy paid the price of his life for that mission. Our young listeners learnt that great love demanded a great sacrifice and Roy’s sacrifice was an illustration of what Jesus Christ had done for us.

So what else did this group of young lives need to know in addition to (a) an understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus and (b) his sacrificial death? They needed to know that when Jesus left the small group of believers on earth, and went to the Father in heaven, the Father (c) would send a special gift in the form of the Holy Spirit.

**Reading: Acts 1:5-9 “WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES UPON YOU...”**

*(5) “For John baptised with water but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.” (6) So when they met together, they asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” (7) He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the **Father** has set by his authority. (8) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (9) After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.*

**POINTS TO NOTE**

- **Verse 5** John baptised with WATER publicly. So the baptism with the SPIRIT would be equally public and be an equally emphatic statement of someone to come. John’s baptism with water pointed to the coming of Jesus Christ. The promised baptism with the Spirit would point to the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- **Verse 6** The Jewish people were looking for the deliverance of the people of Israel from foreign domination and for the establishment of an earthly kingdom. The disciples had not rejected this idea so, with the excitement of the resurrection and of the dawning of a new era, they asked the risen Jesus whether “at this time” he was going to restore the kingdom to Israel.
- **Verse 7** Jesus replied that the calendar of future events was in the hands of the heavenly **Father**. This response gives us an insight into the roles each played. Even though Jesus had risen from the dead and was soon to sit with his Father on the throne (Revelation 3:21) there was a differentiation of duties and authority. Jesus says that the “times or dates” are set by the authority of the Father.
- **Verse 8** Having disappointed them by not giving the disciples by not affirming the restoration of Israel in the way the disciples were expecting, he went on to tell them that they would, nevertheless, receive “power” to be carriers of a testimony that would begin at Jerusalem, carry on through Judea and Samaria finally spreading throughout the whole earth. The disciples would be equipped with Holy Spirit power for a momentous task – of touching the whole world.
- **Verse 9** This was the **Father’s** promise and gift. Power for service. After he said this he was “taken up before their very eyes until an enveloping cloud hid him from their sight. What a moment!

**Reading: Acts 1:10-26 THE WAITING FOR THE PROMISE BEGINS**

Verses 10 and 11 describe the moments following the ascent of Jesus into the sky. It doesn’t happen every day that someone we know seems to defy gravity and simply goes upwards until out of sight! I would do the same as they did – continue to look up, searching the sky. Two angels appeared and simply said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking up into the sky?” I wonder whether the angels were quietly chuckling over this and enjoyed asking the disciples such an obvious question?

When the angels said, “Men of Galilee” they were correct – for all the disciples were Galileans except Judas and he was not present having taken his own life. So the vacancy caused the disciples to think about a replacement.

POINTS TO NOTE

- **Verse 14** “They all joined together constantly in prayer.” Out of this expression of unity and prayerfulness emerged the conviction that somebody should be chosen to replace Judas Iscariot. Being in unity and engaging in prayer is always the appropriate formula for any group or church to discern God’s will. Notice the place of women. While in that era it was the traditional Jewish custom to have men to take the leadership roles, the coming of Jesus brought recognition to the place and purpose of women. The women present in the upstairs room may have been the wives of the apostles (cf. 1 Cor 9:5) and those who ministered to Jesus (Matt 27:55; Luke 8:2-3; 24:22). Specific mention is given of “Mary the mother of Jesus”. This is the last time we hear of her. The brothers of Jesus are mentioned also. James, the oldest after Jesus (Matt 13:55), later became important in the church (12:17; 15:13; Gal 2:9). He probably wrote the epistle named after him. He was not the apostle James who died AD 44 (NIV).
- **Verse 20** Peter puts two scriptures together to suggest that Judas left a vacancy that needed to be filled. They were Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8.

**Reading: Acts 2:1-4 THE WAIT IS OVER: THE WIND AND THE FIRE**

*(1) When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. (2) Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. (3) They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. (4) All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

**DISCUSSION POINTS**

33. Jesus said, “Wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about.” Please explain what this promise was, and what it was for.
34. There has been a difference of opinion among Bible students over whether there was a need to choose a replacement for Judas Iscariot, as Mathias is never heard of again. Was Peter right in initiating a replacement and quoting the scriptures?
35. Why do you think Peter emerged as the leader of the believers?

## FATHER GOD IN THE NEW CHURCH

**Romans 1:7** says: *“To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints. Grace and peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.”* NIV

This is the first time the **Father** or **Father’s** appears in the latter part of the New Testament we call “the letters” (or “epistles”). Jesus had made reference to his Father many times, and these mentions are represented in the four gospels. Luke, in his history of the beginning church had four mentions (Acts 1:4, 1:7, 2:33 and 13:33). Now we take a look at references to the ‘Father’ in the several letters written to churches or individuals by Paul, James, Peter and John. We will take a different approach in this study. We will look at all the references scattered throughout the letters but make brief comment where necessary. The first thing you will notice is that the ‘**Father**’ and the ‘**Lord Jesus Christ**’ are almost always placed together, as part of the greeting, at the start of each letter. Mostly God’s Son is referred to as the **Lord Jesus Christ**. Sometimes the wording is **Christ Jesus our Lord** (1 Tim 1:2) or **Christ Jesus our Saviour** (Titus 1:4). Or sometimes, as given in John’s letters, it is simply **the Son**.

In the majority of the mentions of the Father, Jesus Christ is referred to also. What about the Holy Spirit? Galatians 4:6 says that the Spirit calls from within us, “Abba, Father”.

## REFERENCES TO THE FATHER IN THE LETTERS

Reading:	1 Corinthians 1:1-11	THE “FATHER” THREE TIMES
<b>ROMANS</b>	By Paul	1:7 and peace to you from God our <b>Father</b> and from...
		6:4 raised from the dead through the glory of the <b>Father</b>
		8:15 And by him we cry, “ <b>Abba, Father.</b> ”
<b>1 CORINTHIANS</b>		1:3 from God our <b>Father</b> and the Lord Jesus Christ
	By Paul	8:6 the <b>Father</b> from whom all things came
		15:24 the <b>Father</b> , after he has destroyed all dominion,
<b>2 CORINTHIANS</b>		1:2 from God our <b>Father</b> and the Lord Jesus Christ.
	By Paul	1:3 to the God and <b>Father</b> of our Lord Jesus Christ,
		1:3 the <b>Father</b> of compassion and the God of all c...
		6:18 “I will be a <b>Father</b> to you
<b>GALATIANS</b>		1:1 but by Jesus Christ and God the <b>Father</b>
	By Paul	1:3 from God our <b>Father</b> , and the Lord Jesus Christ
		1:4 according to the will of our God and <b>Father</b>
		4:6 the <b>SPIRIT</b> who calls out, “ <b>Abba, Father</b> ”

While the “Holy Spirit” is mentioned far more in the letters than “the Father”, there is no inequality about this. All three persons of the Trinity are referred to according to their role in the world, and in our life. In Galatians 4:6 the Father, the Son and the Spirit co-ordinate together to reveal our release from the slavery to sin – to the freedom of becoming both a son and heir of God.

To note the context, Galatians 4:4-7 says:

*But when the time had fully come, **God** sent **his Son**, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, **God** sent the **Spirit** of his **Son** into our hearts, the **Spirit** who calls out, “**Abba, Father.**” So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, **God** has made you also an heir.*

<b>EPHESIANS</b>	1:2	from God our <b>Father</b> and the Lord Jesus Christ.
By Paul	1:3	to the God and <b>Father</b> of the Lord Jesus Christ,
	1:17	of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious <b>Father</b> ,
	2:18	through him we both have access to the <b>Father</b>
<u>See Question 46</u>	3:14	for this reason I kneel before the <b>Father</b>
	4:6	one God and <b>Father</b> of us all
	5:20	always giving thanks to God the <b>Father</b>
	6:23	from God the <b>Father</b> and the Lord Jesus Christ
<b>PHILIPPIANS</b>	1:2	to you from God our <b>Father</b> and the Lord Jesus C
By Paul	2:11	to the glory of God the <b>Father</b> .
	4:20	to our God and <b>Father</b> be glory forever
<b>COLOSSIANS</b>	1:2	Grace and peace to you from God our <b>Father</b> .
By Paul	1:3	the <b>Father</b> of our Lord Jesus Christ
	1:12	giving thanks to the <b>Father</b> ,
	3:17	giving thanks to God the <b>Father</b> through him.
<b>1 THESSALONIANS</b>	1:1	in God the <b>Father</b> and the Lord Jesus Christ:
By Paul	1:3	before our God and <b>Father</b> your work produced
	3:11	our God and <b>Father</b> himself and our Lord Jesus
	3:13	and holy in the presence of our God and <b>Father</b>
<b>2 THESSALONIANS</b>	1:1	in God our <b>Father</b> and in the Lord Jesus Christ:
By Paul	1:2	from God the <b>Father</b> and the Lord Jesus Christ.
	2:16	and God our <b>Father</b> who loved us
<b>1 TIMOTHY</b> By Paul	1:2	from God the <b>Father</b> and Christ Jesus our Lord
<b>2 TIMOTHY</b> By Paul	1:2	from God the <b>Father</b> and Christ Jesus our Lord
<b>TITUS</b> By Paul	1:4	the <b>Father</b> and Christ Jesus our Saviour
<b>PHILEMON</b> By Paul	1:3	from God our <b>Father</b> and the Lord Jesus Christ
<b>HEBREWS</b>	1:5	today I have become your <b>Father</b> ”?
Unknown author	1:5	Or again, “I will be his <b>Father</b> , and he will be my son.

<b>Reading: Hebrews 1:1-14 JESUS CHRIST – SON OF GOD AND HEIR.</b>
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This is a most remarkable part of Scripture. The writer to the Hebrews (whoever he is) applies two Old Testament references to Jesus Christ. This passage (Psalm 2:7) is quoted by Paul in Acts 13:33 as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ’s resurrection. 2 Samuel 7:14 is also quoted as referring to Jesus Christ. The first chapter of Hebrews is designed to show the absolute superiority of Jesus over angels, but also to establish quite firmly that he is the voice of God, heir of all things, maker of the universe, the sustainer of the universe and the purifier of all sin. Finally, Jesus sits beside the Father in heaven as an equal.

(Hebrews continued) 12:9 to the **Father** of our spirits and live!

Matthew 13:55 tells us who the brothers of Jesus were. They were James, Joseph, Simon and Judas. There is good evidence for accepting that James and Judas were the writers of the letters by James and Jude. James was the eldest of the four boys and became the leader of the Jerusalem church (Acts 15). He

was one of those whom the risen Lord appeared to (1 Cor 15:7). Paul called him a “pillar” of the church (Gal 2:9). After Peter was rescued from prison, he told his friends to tell James (Acts 12:17). And because James was so well known, Judas, the fourth-born son of Mary and Joseph, could identify himself simply as “a brother of James” (Jude 1:1).

<b>JAMES</b>		1:17	down from the <b>Father</b> of the heavenly lights
	By James	1:27	religion that God our <b>Father</b> accepts as pure
		3:9	With the tongue we praise our Lord and <b>Father</b>
<b>1 PETER</b>		1:2	the foreknowledge of God the <b>Father</b> , through
	By Peter	1:3	to the God and <b>Father</b> of our Lord Jesus Christ!
		1:17	<b>Father</b> , who judges each one’s work impartially
<b>2 PETER</b>	By Peter	1:17	the <b>Father</b> when the voice came to him
<b>1 JOHN</b>	By John	1:2	which was with the <b>Father</b> and has appeared
		1:3	And our fellowship is with the <b>Father</b> and
		2:1	we have One who speaks to the <b>Father</b>
		2:13	I write to you...because you have known the <b>Father</b>
		2:15	loves the world, the love of the <b>Father</b> is not in him
		2:16	comes not from the <b>Father</b> but from the world
		2:22	is the Antichrist-he denies the <b>Father</b> and the Son
		2:23	no one who denies the Son has the <b>Father</b>
		2:23	whoever acknowledges the Son, has the <b>Father</b> also
		2:24	also will remain in the Son and in the <b>Father</b>
<b>2 JOHN</b>	By John	1:3	from God the <b>Father</b> and from Jesus Christ,
		1:3	the <u><b>Father’s</b></u> son will be with us in truth and love.
		1:4	in the truth, just as the <b>Father</b> commanded us,
		1:9	in the teaching has both the <b>Father</b> and the Son
<b>JUDE</b>	By Judas	1:1	by God the <b>Father</b> and kept by Jesus Christ:
	(Brother of James v1 of Jesus)		

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

36. What is the reason Paul kneels before the Father? (Ephesians 3:14)
37. James 1:1 has James calling himself “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.” James 2:1 has James affirming that (his brother) Jesus is now “our glorious Lord Jesus Christ”. What does this tell us about the man who knew Jesus so well as he grew up in the family?
38. It is most likely that Jude (Judas/Judah) is the fourth brother. He was not an Apostle (Jude 17). This Jude calls himself a “servant of Jesus and a brother of James” (Jude 7). Comment on 20-21 and 24-25.

## FATHER AND SON ON THE THRONE

### REFERENCES TO GOD THE FATHER IN THE BOOK OF THE REVELATION

There are five references to the “Father” in the Book of the Revelation – and how immensely significant they are! May I state their importance?

- Revelation 1:6 Jesus has freed us from sin to serve his God and Father
- Revelation 2:27 The Father has given Jesus authority – to give us authority
- Revelation 3:5 Jesus will acknowledge us (those in white) before his Father
- Revelation 3:21 The overcomer will sit with Jesus, as Jesus sits with the Father
- Revelation 14:1 We will have the name of Jesus and the Father’s on our forehead

**Reading: Revelation 1:1-6 WE SERVE (his – Jesus’) GOD AND FATHER**

The Amplified Bible says, “And formed us into a kingdom [a royal race], priests to His God and Father.” Do you recall “My God, my God...” and “Father I commit to you my spirit...” ? Also the words of Jesus to Mary, “I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” Jesus emphasises a special honour and inclusive relationship here. Please refer to Exodus 19:6, Zechariah 3:1-10 and 1 Peter 2:5 and 9 and discuss point 39.

Please turn to the following Scripture readings and after each one discuss points 40 to 43.

**Reading: Revelation 2:18-29 AUTHORITY FROM THE FATHER**

**Reading: Revelation 3:1-6 BEFORE THE FATHER AND HIS ANGELS**

**Reading: Revelation 3:14-22 SITTING DOWN WITH MY FATHER**

**Reading: Revelation 14:1-5 THE NAME OF JESUS AND THE FATHER’S.**

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

- |     |                 |  |
|-----|-----------------|--|
| 39. | Revelation 1:6. | What does it mean by ‘a kingdom and priests’?  |
| 40. | Revelation 2:27 | Because Jesus has received “authority” from the Father, we have received “authority” from Jesus. What do you think this means for us when we enter the heavenly realm? |
| 41. | Revelation 3:5  | Why will we be acknowledged before the angels also?  |
| 42. | Revelation 3:21 | Why are we entitled to sit with Jesus on his throne? (You may like to refer to Matthew 19:28, 2 Timothy 2:12 and Revelation 20:4 and 6.)                               |
| 43. | Revelation 14:1 | What is the significance (or interpretation) of having both the name of Jesus and of the Father on the believer’s forehead?  |