Promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer in the New Testament: A study of their relationship

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PROMISES TO AND LIMITATIONS UPON PETITIONARY PRAYER IN
THE NEW TESTAMENT: A STUDY OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Edith Cowan University
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Date of Submission: 16 January, 2009
USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.
ABSTRACT

The New Testament contains both promises to petitionary prayer (Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–11; Mark 9:29; 11:23–24 par. Matt 21:21–22; John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23–24, 26; Jas 1:5–8; 4:1–3; 5:13–18) and restrictions upon it (e.g., Mark 14:36 par. Matt. 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42; John 12:27–28; Rom 8:26–27; 2 Cor 12:7–10); the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9–13 par. Luke 11:2b–4) demonstrates both aspects. The promises to petition embrace all of life's needs, including relief from present or anticipated suffering. The non-answer of such petitions (e.g., Jesus' prayer at Gethsemane) is attributed by many scholars to the behaviour or faith of the petitioner or to the "will of God," which overrides the present needs of the petitioner. Such solutions tend to be grounded in a prior theological framework rather than in the exegesis of the text. Furthermore, these solutions fail to account for the presence of apparently contradictory instructions or examples of prayer within the same text or in the name of the same author or speaker. In Matthew's Gospel, for example, Jesus exhorts the disciples to "ask, and it shall be given you" (7:7) and yet restricts his own prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (26:39, 42). The exegesis of representative New Testament texts that promise and/or restrict petitionary prayer within their literary, historical, and theological contexts reveals the following constellation of recurring factors for virtually all texts: the generosity of God, who provides more than is requested of him in the fulfilment of his salvation purposes; the co-existence of promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer within the "already–not yet" eschatological tension; the mediation of Christ as guarantor, ground, teacher, example, co-object and co-petitioner; the comforting, empowering, and advocating intercession of the Spirit; and, the conditions of open-hearted and dependent faith and a community marked by forgiveness of others. The main findings of the study are that: (1) the prayer promises and limitations in the New Testament are not opposed in a final or deterministic sense but, because of the above factors, work together in the unfolding of God's salvation plan; and, (2) the prayer promises of the New Testament are so frequent and so bold that they must be thoroughly integrated into any depiction of New Testament petitionary prayer and not relegated into second place.
DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

1. Incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;
2. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or
3. contain any defamatory material.

I also grant permission for the Library at Edith Cowan University to make duplicate copies of my thesis as required.

Signature: ________________________________
Date: _________________________________
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work has been produced—over a period of about ten years—whilst having the privilege of serving at Trinity Theological College, Perth, Western Australia. I thank the Council, Trustees, supporters, teaching colleagues, administrative and library staff, and students of the college—along with many other friends in Perth and beyond—for their prayers, encouragement, and generosity to bring this project to its completion.

Study leave at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, and at Moore Theological College, Sydney, New South Wales, was invaluable in breaking the back of the research. The boards, staff, and students of these august institutions were warm in their hospitality and fellowship during those periods. The Australian College of Theology, Sydney, and Edith Cowan University, Perth, were generous in their provision of financial and other assistance to facilitate research leave.

Three people may be singled out for particular thanks: my colleague, Allan Chapple, former Principal at Trinity, who provided early guidance and continued help, including a final reading of the work; Peter Bolt, Head of Department of New Testament and Greek at Moore Theological College, who supplied detailed feedback towards the end and many words of encouragement along the way; and, Peter Bedford, now John and Jane Wold Professor of Religious Studies and Director of Religious Studies at Union College, Schenectady, New York, who, as supervisor, helped me to see the required level and then provided the level-headed and timely advice to get me there.

The largest and least repayable debt of thanks, however, goes to my wife, Athena, and to our three daughters Liana (and Jeff), Valerie (and David), and Irene. The weekends, evenings, holidays, and other rest spaces that have been filled with "the PhD" are beyond counting. During this time, they remained positive and hopeful even when I had lost heart. This work is dedicated to Athena who again and again pointed to the one who "gives generously and without reproach," the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the praise.
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ABBREVIATIONS

All citations and abbreviations conform to those found in Patrick H. Alexander, John F. Kutsko, James D. Ernest, Shirley A. Decker-Lucke, and David L. Peterson (eds.), *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1999). The following abbreviations are not found in the *SBL Handbook*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUS</td>
<td>American University Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIS</td>
<td>Biblical Interpretation Series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIM</td>
<td>Christianity in the Making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COQG</td>
<td>Christian Origins and the Question of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESV</td>
<td>English Standard Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HTANT</td>
<td>Historisch Theologische Auslegung des Neues Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITS</td>
<td>International Theological Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBTM</td>
<td>Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNTC</td>
<td>The Pillar New Testament Commentary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TKNT</td>
<td>Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USFIS</td>
<td>University of South Florida International Studies in Formative Christianity and Judaism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Reason for the Study

The present work is an investigation of the relationship of promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer in the New Testament. The stimulation for the work arose in part from the final chapter of *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Function of Biblical Prayer*, by Patrick D. Miller. Miller argues that Old Testament petitioners—when confronted with suffering—prayed with full assurance that removal of suffering was God's will. New Testament believers, on the other hand, suppress their own need for release or help and instead request that God's will be done. The difference, according to Miller, can be attributed to a "theology of the cross" that has shaped Christian prayers. This may be graphically seen in Jesus' quotation of Psalm 22 from the cross. Miller turns this observation towards a theology of Christian suffering and argues that Christians should identify with the suffering people of the world. He concludes that, "intercession [for those who
suffer] now takes precedence over the prayer of petition in the dialogue of faith. The prayer for the suffering of others is the paradigm of faithful prayer."

A complete evaluation of Miller's thesis would require an investigation of petitionary prayer in the Old and the New Testaments as well as their traditions. After some exploration, it was decided that the nature of New Testament petition was the less researched area. A number of questions were raised in the light of Miller's conclusions: Is the Christian not to pray for his or her release from suffering or harm? Is intercession for the suffering of others a more Christian type of prayer than petition for oneself? How are the prayer promises of the New Testament (e.g., Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13) integrated into the reality of suffering? To these may be added the perennial question of why some prayers are answered and others are not. It was clear that a study that focussed on the integration of texts that promote and promise successful petition (whereby one obtains that for which one asks, e.g., Matt 7:7–8 par. Luke 11:9–10) with texts that appear to limit petition for one reason or another (e.g., Mark 14:36 par. Matt. 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42) would be worth pursuing.

Further investigation proved this hunch right. Firstly, no detailed study on the relationship between promises to petition and the restrictions upon it within the New Testament (see B.3, below) was able to be uncovered. There are studies on the prayer promises, studies of particular prayer texts or events (e.g., Gethsemane, the Lord's Prayer), and studies on one or more writer's prayer texts (e.g., Paul, John's


6 For example, Donald Simm West, "Giving God a Reason: Motives in the Laments of the Psalter," (Unpublished paper, Trinity Theological College, 1999).


Gospel, etc.), but no focussed treatment of how the promises and the limitations relate to each other. Secondly, an investigation of the New Testament showed that the tension between promises to and limitations upon petition is found across all parts of the New Testament canon, signalling that its importance may have been greater than previously realised (see next section for details). Thirdly, although Miller (and others) had concentrated on key texts, others had not been subject to detailed analysis with respect to the question of the relationship between promise and limitation in petitionary prayer (e.g., Jas 1:5–8; 4:2–3; 5:13–18; 2 Cor 12:7–10). Finally, the questions raised by Miller's book and other scholars demonstrated that a clearer understanding of the relationship between promises to and limitations upon petition would be of immense assistance to successive generations of praying people—as the flow of popular and technical books (as well as websites) on the topic show. How should the believer pray in the light of apparently contradictory

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10 For an up-to-date bibliography, see Crump, *Petitionary Prayer*, 305–327.

instructions and examples of prayer within the New Testament? Books and opinions lean towards either limitation or promise, but both sides are given equal airing in the individual books of the New Testament.

In the light of these preliminary investigations, the thesis direction was set: to investigate the relationship between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer in order to make a contribution towards a theological integration. The remainder of this chapter will present the texts that promise or restrict petitionary prayer, survey recent scholarship that has touched on the topic, refine the thesis topic, and lay out the scope and method of the study.

B. Promise and Limitation in New Testament Petition: Texts and Scholarship

1. Overview of Pertinent Texts


Ask, and it will be given you; search and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. (Matt 7:8–9 par. Luke 11:9–10)

He said to them, "This kind can come out only through prayer." (Mark 9:29)

So I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11:24 par. Matt 21:22)

Prayer promises (with and without explicit conditions) are also found in the Johannine writings (John 14:13–14; 15:7, 16; 16:23–24, 26; 1 John 3:22; 5:14–15), the Pauline Corpus (Phil 4:6–7), Hebrews (4:16; 5:7), the Letter of James (1:5; 5:13–16a; 4:2–3 should also be considered), and the First Letter of Peter (5:7).

I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it. (John 14:13–14)

If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. (John 15:7)

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12 Caba, *La oración*, has the most detailed analysis of the prayer promises.
13 All Bible quotations in this section are from the NRSV.
You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. (John 15:16)

On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete. (John 16:23–24)

Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have boldness before God; and we receive from him whatever we ask, because we obey his commandments and do what pleases him. (1 John 3:22)

And this is the boldness that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him. (1 John 5:14–15)

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:6–7)

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Heb 4:16)

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. (Heb 5:7)

If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you. But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea […]. (Jas 1:5–6)

Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. (Jas 5:14–16a)

Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. (1 Pet 5:7)

Concerning the limitations upon petitionary prayer, examples of unanswered or submissive prayer include: Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36 par. Matt. 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42) and Paul's threefold plea to the Lord (2 Cor 12:7–10).
He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want." (Mark 14:36 par. Matt. 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42)

Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2 Cor 12:8–10)

Other texts that imply petitions will not be answered or that petitioners should restrict their prayers are found in Paul (e.g., Rom 8:26–27), the Gospel of John (12:27–28; 17:1–26), the Letter of James (4:2–3) and First Peter (3:7):

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Rom 8:26–27)

"Now is my soul troubled. And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name." Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." (John 12:27–28)

You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you get on your pleasures. (Jas 4:2–3)

Husbands, in the same way, show consideration for your wives in your life together, paying honour to the woman as the weaker sex, since they too are also heirs of the gracious gift of life—so that nothing may hinder your prayers. (1 Pet 3:7)

Alongside these texts, the prayers of the saints referred to in the book of Revelation (5:8; 8:2–3; cf. 6:9)\(^{14}\) and the example of Paul's submission to God's will in Acts 21:14 (though prayer is not mentioned in the context) should also be noted as examples of unanswered petitions.

In between these two poles (i.e., promise and limitation) stands the Lord's Prayer, which contains both petitions that appear to limit success (e.g., "your will be done") and petitions that imply success (e.g., "give us today our daily bread"):  

---

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors
And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

When the texts are laid out one by one, three things become apparent: (1) the frequency and distribution of prayer promises across the New Testament is greater than previously acknowledged; (2) the placement of both promises to petition and limitations upon petition within the same book or by the same writer/speaker points to a theological tension within those books or corpora; and, (3) the range of promises (conditional and unconditional) and limitations (human and divine) also raises the question of their integration into a whole. The complexity and breadth of the tension between promise and restriction in the New Testament supports the case for its examination. The variety of the material is clear from the table on the following page. The most open promise is placed on the extreme left (Matt 7:7–8 par. Luke 11:9–10) and the most restrictive condition is placed on the extreme right (Mark 14:36 par. Matt 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42). The Lord's Prayer, which contains both promise and limitation to petitionary prayer, holds the central position in the spectrum.
### TABLE I.1 RANGE OF PROMISES TO AND RESTRICTIONS UPON PETITIONARY PRAYER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promise/Restriction</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Ask, and it will be given you&quot;</td>
<td>(Matt 7:7–11, par.; cf. Luke 11:5–8; 18:1–8)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all […]</td>
<td>(Jas 1:5, 6cf. 5:13–16a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;So I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours&quot;</td>
<td>(Mark 11:24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Your will be done […] Give us this day our daily bread&quot;</td>
<td>(Matt 6:10,11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[...] for we do not know how to pray as we ought […]</td>
<td>(Jas 5:13–16a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[...] if we ask anything according to his will he hears us</td>
<td>(1 John 5:14–15; cf. John 11:41–42)</td>
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<td>Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, &quot;My grace is sufficient for you […]&quot;</td>
<td>(Mark 14:35–36, pars.; cf. John 12:27–28)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**"Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."** (Mark 14:35–36, pars.; cf. John 12:27–28)
2. Survey of Scholarship on New Testament Petitionary Prayer and Its Limitations

a. Introduction
The following survey of scholarship is limited to recent authors who have addressed the tension between promise to and restriction upon petitionary prayer. The purpose here is not only to outline the arguments of others and thereby establish a need for further research, but also to ensure that the texts selected are agreed by scholars as being the most pertinent and that the lines of the following discussion are on target.

b. Patrick D. Miller
Miller rightly recognises the implicit relationship of human petition and the will of God in all petitionary prayer and supplication, but argues that the assumptions about God behind this relationship are different in the Old Testament than they are in the New Testament. Miller shows how the motive clauses of a lament psalm, for example, present a case to God in support of a request or plea. In Miller's view, these arguments "indicate persuasion is as much the heart of the prayer as plea." The Psalmist's case is based on a pre-existing belief about God as one who has been both merciful and powerful in the life of Israel. With the New Testament prayer material in view, Miller states that,

[Motive clauses] appeal to God to be and to act as God would be and act. Here clearly prayer is not simply "thy will be done." Indeed the petitioner is at pains to impress his or her will, that is, one's need and sense of what God should do, upon the deity. And yet, in another sense, the prayer for God to act "according to your steadfast love" or "for your name's sake" is in the profoundest way possible a call upon God to help, because that is God's will.

Miller argues that in the New Testament, in contrast to the Old Testament, "[…] we begin to encounter the prayer for help that clearly subordinates the present trouble of

---

15 Miller, *Biblical Prayer*.
18 Miller, *Biblical Prayer*, 126: "It is in the very nature and structure of the relationship between God and the human creature that the deliverance from pain and suffering, the overcoming of affliction, guilt and oppression by others can be counted upon."
19 Miller, *Biblical Prayer*, 326, emphasis original. On p. 321 he states, "In the Old Testament petitions there is an implicit assumption that the cry for help is appropriate because a priori it is God's will to save the innocent and righteous."
the one who prays to the will of God [...].”

This subordination is particularly evident, says Miller, in their respective views on enemies. In the Old Testament, the petitioner's enemies are presumed to be God's enemies and ripe for judgement and may be "cursed" by the psalmist, while in the New Testament enemies (though they may be ripe for judgement) are to be "blessed" or prayed for that their sins may be forgiven. Miller concludes:

Here we see the first sign of the way in which prayer begins to be shaped and reshaped by a theology of the cross. And it is not just a theology of the cross that is at work; there is a cruciform praxis at work here affecting all of life, including, in a most dramatic fashion, the prayer of the suffering and dying.

Miller bases his observations on the exegesis of several key New Testament prayer texts (see below), but in order for these to be given pride of place he must deal with the promises to petition, and this proves to be a weaker analysis. He tends to blunt the boldness of Jesus' Synoptic promises with qualifications, being more concerned to protect the promise from abuse than to affirm its encouragement to boldness and expectation of answer. For example, Miller considers 1 John 5:14 in the light of John 15:7, concluding that, The freedom of prayer and the responsiveness of God are found for those who abide in Christ and in whom Christ's words are at work and controlling. The prayer of such petitioners will, therefore, once more be in accord with the will and word of Christ. It is not a wish list. Those "words of Jesus" [...] include all the words about prayer and quite specifically the Lords' Prayer itself.

Miller's section on the prayer promises concludes: "So prayer is open and unrestrained except by the rule of love and the will of God. Whatever is asked from

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22 Miller, *Biblical Prayer*, 308.
25 Commenting on Mark 11:23–24, Miller, *Biblical Prayer*, 310, says: "The saying of Jesus in Mark, to 'have faith in God,' that 'whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it and it will be yours,' is not a claim that in fact mountains move into the sea by some sort of mind game called prayer. The emphasis is indeed on the call to faith, but this is once again an exhortation to pray in trust and confidence, a feature of prayer that is consistently a feature of the prayers for help in Scripture. Jesus' words are a reinforcement of that to the disciples, a call to trust in the Lord who hears the prayer of the faithful and righteous."
God that way is sure to be received.”27 As will be shown in the exegesis chapters, Miller's observations are half-right—petition is restrained by the rule of love and the will of God. However, he has not delved into the literary or theological context of the respective prayer promises, treated the whole gamut of New Testament texts, or stopped to define what these restrictions mean in their contexts.

In support of his conclusion about the bias toward suffering and the shift away from boldness in New Testament prayer, Miller cites four key texts. Firstly, he notes the structure of the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9–11 par. Luke 11:2–4), which places the requests "your kingdom come, your will be done" before requests for self, including the petition "deliver us from (the) evil (one)." These earlier petitions are, according to Miller, "prior and controlling [...] the prayer for the will of God takes priority over all other petitions."28 Miller is aware of eschatological influences upon the Lord's Prayer but does not bring these into play. Secondly, Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–42; par. Matt 26:26–46; Luke 22:39–46), "becomes the exemplum of the prayer he teaches the disciples: Your will be done," underlining the controlling nature of the previous example from the Lord's Prayer.29 In Matthew's Gethsemane story there are three petitions, the second of which uses the exact petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Your will be done." Of this Miller says, "The [Old Testament] prayer for help has become fully a prayer of submission to the will of God."30 In an endnote, Miller observes that this "will" is the salvific purpose of God at work in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.31 Unfortunately, this comment is not further developed.

Thirdly, Jesus' prayer in John 12:27–28 moves a step further down the path of God's will, removing any reference to the Old Testament prayer for deliverance; so

27 Miller, Biblical Prayer, 311.
28 Miller, Biblical Prayer, 321. And again: "The intent and effect of these petitions are to subordinate all prayer to the will and purpose of God. The starting point of Christian prayer on this model is the prayer for the effecting of God's purpose, not the prayer for our needs. The order is important in that the petitions for ourselves come after and under the petitions for God to do and be what God will do and be or for God to accomplish through human and divine action the will and purpose that God seeks. Every petition and supplication and intercession is shaped and controlled by the prior prayer for the manifestation of God's rule and the accomplishment of God's will" (322, emphasis original).
29 Miller, Biblical Prayer, 322.
30 Though the point he makes is not undermined, Miller (322) seems to think that the third petition of Matthew's Lord's Prayer is also found in Luke's Gospel.
31 Miller, Biblical Prayer, 434, n. 77.
controlling is the will of God for the Johannine Jesus that he explicitly rejects a prayer for help. What was a motive clause in the Old Testament petitions ("for your name's sake") has become a petition in itself ("Your name be glorified"). "Jesus in this instance does not even consider the possibility of his deliverance in prayer. [...] His prayer is only for God's glory." 

Lastly, Miller argues that if Paul's three-fold request in 2 Corinthians 12:8—which is the only clear petitionary prayer for self found in the Pauline corpus—has been overtaken by God's will, then his whole view of petitionary prayer has shifted away from that which he inherited in Judaism. "[T]he suffering of the praying, faithful petitioner is subordinated to another purpose. [...] Paul prays for divine deliverance, but instead is told that his trouble and suffering, whatever they may be, are where the power of God will be manifest."

Miller has strengthened his case by drawing on examples from a spread of New Testament texts and writers. He has also isolated the key texts that must be covered in any consideration of the tension between promise and restriction in petition (the Lord's Prayer, Gethsemane, John 12, and 2 Cor 12). But Miller's case has a number of weaknesses. Firstly, he fails to integrate the prayer promises into an overall theology of petitionary prayer in the New Testament. Indeed, at points he appears more concerned to hedge the promises from misreading. Secondly, Miller approaches the texts from a theological or holistic viewpoint rather than through the particular emphasis of each book or author; that is, literary, social, and historical factors are not treated at depth. Thirdly, he has either omitted or undervalued some texts in his examination. The book of James, which contains a significant amount of relevant prayer material, is virtually untouched. Lastly, Miller has begun to deal with the context and the cause of unanswered prayer (i.e., suffering and the cross event), but he has not investigated the theological frameworks of the writers themselves. The will of God has become for Miller the spectacles through which all petitionary prayer is examined rather than one among a number of features supplied in the texts.

32 Miller, Biblical Prayer, 322.
33 Miller, Biblical Prayer, 322. The closeness of this petition to the first petition of the Lord's Prayer would add weight to Miller's statement.
34 Miller, Biblical Prayer, 323.
c. John Koenig

Koenig offers a review of all New Testament prayer, which, he says, begins with God, who "seeks us out for a conscious encounter with the true Source of our being" and is the means by which believers "join him in his gracious work of healing the world." The Spirit creates this communion with God and Christ in prayer, as he helps us to "welcome God's loving interventions" into our lives and the life of the world. Koenig's view of prayer is motivated by the belief that, "[f]or the sake of God's glory we must want and work for God's rule." Prayer is essential in this process as Christians realise their calling to be "co-workers with God for the world's redemption," to perceive the wonders of God's new order but also to join it at a deeper level of their being and acting. Moreover, "without the heart-work of our prayers, God's plan will suffer loss."

Koenig turns to the thesis question in his chapter titled, "Whatever You Ask for in Prayer." Here Koenig firstly notes Jesus' encouragement to pray boldly since the abundance of the kingdom of God is "there for the asking." The focus for Koenig's analysis of petitionary prayer is the promise of Jesus recorded in Mark 11:22–24. Koenig reads this text as referring to prayer which "suspends our [113x39]35

36 Koenig, Rediscovering, 5.
37 Koenig, Rediscovering, 25.
38 Koenig, Rediscovering, 47. Loving interventions are specific testimonies of the leading edge of God's kingdom. He continues, "Precisely in the chief petition of the Lord's Prayer ['Your kingdom come'] the Spirit leads us by renewing our hearts, guiding us into all truth, and sanctifying what we offer […] And somehow, through God's overflowing mercy, our prayer helps to bring the kingdom in, and us into the kingdom." Elsewhere he describes this process as, "Again and again the kingdom comes, and in some mysterious fashion our praying helps to bring it about" (53).
39 Koenig, Rediscovering, 160.
40 Koenig, Rediscovering, 160.
41 Koenig, Rediscovering, 161. Working from 2 Cor 5:17, argues: "In effect the apostle [Paul] is saying: 'Whenever any one of you realizes your life in Christ as a praying person, a magnificent new world will appear. Again and again you will discover it, as if for the first time. And, as you do, you will become, in a manner previously unimagined, an indispensable part of its formation.'"
42 Koenig, Rediscovering, 163, emphasis original.
44 Koenig, Rediscovering, 53.
disbelief, trusting that every sincere petition will gain its reward from the Abba who sees in secret [...].”

By blending in other New Testament allusions and by using the phrase "its reward," Koenig appears to interpret Jesus' promise in Mark 11 as something more than a straightforward granting of the actual petition made. This appearance is confirmed by Koenig's two-step argument. Firstly, he concludes (with Sharyn Dowd, see ch. IV.D, below) that in Mark 11:22–24 the writer is exhorting his community to "hold onto its worldview in which everything is possible for God and not to give into the doubts that challenge that worldview." Koenig concludes: "tremendous power for good is available to us if only we persist in bringing our requests to God." Here Koenig shifts the emphasis of the text from the boldness of the promise of a mountain to be moved to a symbolic understanding (i.e., "tremendous power for good").

The second step Koenig takes is to connect Mark 11:22–24 with Paul's teaching on the presence and work of the Spirit in prayer (e.g., Rom 8:15–16, 26–27), saying that: "The first and always granted answer to our petitions is a deepened relationship with our Abba [...] the Spirit is always granted, whatever else we ask for."

In dealing with the reasons for unanswered petitions, Koenig notes firstly that a divine No may be due to the request being in conflict with our true selves (Jas 1:7). But, as Koenig recognises, this approach does not do justice to Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane and so further investigation is required. This leads him to the Johannine prayer material (John 14:13–14; 15:7, 16; 16:23–24, 26; 1 John 3:22; 5:14–15) from which he concludes that "the effectiveness of our praying is said to depend not on faith alone but on abiding in Jesus, making our requests according to his will, or

45 Koenig, Rediscovering, 53–54.
47 Koenig, Rediscovering, 54. Here Koenig appears to be inferring that the use of the present tense ἔχετε in Mark 11:22 is an encouragement to persist. This may be so, but such a view is not explicitly stated in the text as it is in, say, Luke 18:1.
48 Koenig, Rediscovering, 54, emphasis original.
49 Koenig, Rediscovering, 57: "Part of us, either the true or the false self, does not actually want what we are asking for; and God honors this duplicity by refusing to grant our petition until we can be taught what we truly desire by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26)."
rendering obedience to him and God.”\textsuperscript{50} Prayer in Jesus' name is prayer with Jesus as co-petitioner; we are "no longer strictly autonomous individuals."\textsuperscript{51} Drawing Romans 8:26–27 back into the discussion again, Koenig suggests that the Spirit is also involved in this inner work, for the Spirit not only assists prayer but also searches hearts—perhaps for hardness against others when forgiveness is needed.\textsuperscript{52}

Koenig concludes that the "apparent contradiction between Jesus' bold claims for the power of prayer and his inability to obtain what he asked for in Gethsemane" should be explained as follows:

Surely it is better to conclude that Jesus learned something new in Gethsemane about the goodness of God's will, terrible as it was (Heb 5:7–8) [than to conclude he had doubts]. Precisely in his prayer that \textit{Abba} might save him, \textit{something more} was revealed to him about the role he was to play in God's glorious redemption of the world; and he chose it anew. He freely let go of his petition and freely took up his cross.\textsuperscript{53}

The Gethsemane prayer was a moment of illumination, according to Koenig.\textsuperscript{54} Once a glimpse of God's glory in the restoration of the world (gained through cross-like action and prayer) has been caught, the specific (and unanswered) prayer is transformed.\textsuperscript{55} Koenig is on the right track here, but the difficulty of determining precisely what it was that Jesus understood and whether this new understanding

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\textsuperscript{50} Koenig, \textit{Rediscovering}, 58.

\textsuperscript{51} Koenig, \textit{Rediscovering}, 58.

\textsuperscript{52} Mark 11:25; James 5:16; and, Matt 5:23 are cited, but perhaps Heb 4:12 could be added.

\textsuperscript{53} Koenig, \textit{Rediscovering}, 60, emphasis added.


\textsuperscript{55} Koenig, \textit{Rediscovering}, 62. Koenig notes that Ephesians 3:20–21 points petitioners to the promise that their \textit{un}answered prayers may in fact be answered "infinitely beyond everything imaginable." With respect to Paul's prayer for the removal of the thorn in the flesh, Koenig notes that the Lord said No to Paul's plea (2 Cor 12:9) and yet Paul is able to say that Christ is God's Yes to his promises and that prayer to God though Jesus' name can be concluded with Amen (2 Cor 1:19–20); cf. pp. 120–127. Similar conclusions are found throughout Koenig's book, e.g.: "Over against life's absurdity, NT believers advance the bold claim that with his own prayer of desolation from the cross Jesus somehow embraces every cry of anguish and molds it into a force for redemption that cannot be resisted, either in heaven or on earth" (116; cf. 84, 107–108).
assisted him to "freely let go of his petition and freely [take] up his cross" remains. Perhaps the literary and theological context of the saying may provide more clues to take the discussion past Koenig's work.

Koenig, like Miller, rightly connects the glory of God, the cross of Christ, redemption, and prayer in the Gethsemane episode and its consequences. This cluster of concepts directs him back to Romans 8:15–27 to conclude that, for Paul's readers, "to call God Abba, as Jesus did, to be led by the Spirit in prayer, means to share in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of the world's healing and ultimate glorification."

Koenig has analysed some of the core texts of the thesis topic more thoroughly than Miller (esp. Mark 11:22–24; Rom 8:26–27; 2 Cor 12:7–10). Like Miller, however, Koenig downplays the bold promises of Jesus to those who pray (e.g., Matt 7:7–9; Mark 11:22–24), even speaking about petitions as "irrelevant" in comparison to the answers of God that are "infinitely beyond everything imaginable." Koenig's guiding text—Romans 8:26–27—is understood in the light of personal, corporate, and cosmic regeneration (cf. 2 Cor 5:17). Petition for mundane matters does not appear to rank alongside such lofty concepts. And yet, even Paul does not underplay the importance of the mundane (e.g., Phil 4:6–7). Rather, he connects it into the whole fabric of God's provision "in Christ Jesus." Nevertheless, Koenig has also offered the important suggestion that the non-answer of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane was the doorway into a new experience or understanding of God's kingdom purpose in the redemption of the world, understood as something to take place here and now as well as ultimately. Giving more definition to this "new" understanding will prove important in determining the relationship between promise and limitation in petitionary prayer.

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56 He cites Mark 8–10; John 17, Phil 2:5–11; 2 Cor 3–5; 1 Pet 5 as other texts where glory, suffering and redemption are found.
57 Koenig, Rediscovering, 60. See also p. 114: "According to the NT, every prayer of faith counts for good at the heavenly throne. Thus it not only bears fruit in ourselves and for those for whom we intercede but is also taken up into God's cosmic plan for redemption." Koenig's analysis of petitionary prayer and the will of God leads him to a similar conclusion to that of Miller, particularly with the focus on the way whereby prayer apparently influences the "redemption" of the world. Koenig emphasizes the active participation of believers in the social and political life of those who suffer and those who perpetrate suffering.
Cullmann's book is a study of New Testament prayer in light of theological and philosophical efforts to minimise petitionary prayer in favour of either praise (following Rousseau and Schleiermacher) or moral action (following Kant and Dorothy Sölle). Cullmann rests his work on two interrelated premises, to which he returns frequently: (1) God is a loving creator who has made humans to be freely united with his loving will, and, (2) at the heart of all prayer is a divine–human encounter. Unlike the previous two scholars, Cullmann seeks to explain New Testament prayer texts more deliberately within their respective corpora or texts and this makes his study more focussed and testable.

Cullmann boldly refers to the tension between promise and limitation in petitionary prayer as the "scandalous contradiction between Jesus' [...] categorical promise that petitions prayed in faith will be heard [...] and are not heard." He looks at this "contradiction" in the light of Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane and Paul's prayer teaching in particular (i.e., Rom 8:26–27; 2 Cor 12:8) and says it is related to the different ways by which a petition is "heard." Cullmann distinguishes various kinds of requests that can be made of God within the New Testament: requests presented to God and answered directly (e.g., Matt 7:7–9), requests made upon the condition of eschewing all doubt and exercising complete faith (e.g., Mark 11:23–24), and requests heard at a deeper level through submitting to the will of God (e.g., Gethsemane). Why are there different ways by which petitions can be heard? Initially, Cullmann maintains the Gethsemane petition belongs to different circumstances than the prayer of faith:

[The command not to doubt] is connected [...] to the performance of an action, whereas in Gethsemane (and consequently in all

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59 This love is experienced and expressed in return by humans as a child would trust a parent—a relationship of love. See Cullmann, *Prayer*, 130–132.
60 Cullmann, *Prayer*, 17–21. "It is correct to understand the God of the Bible as the God not of philosophical ontology but of experienced relationship." (129)
61 Cullmann, *Prayer*, 121: "On the basis of the account of the distinctive stamp of each New Testament author [...] without violently bringing together what are certainly differences I shall attempt to demonstrate exegetically the common tendencies and thus venture a brief outline of a New Testament theology of prayer."
prayers that involve the will of God) the issue is more one of deliverance from a situation which is regarded as misfortune.\textsuperscript{63}

But Cullmann does not see this as a hard and fast distinction and returns to his frequently stated position that "we must combine Jesus' admonitions to the disciples to pray [with faith] with his own readiness to submit to the will of God."\textsuperscript{64} Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane is, therefore, the ultimate model of petition for Cullmann. Jesus' desire to conform to the Father's will in Gethsemane emerged, he says, from a settled disposition and unity that may have shaped all of his prayers in his encounter with the Creator (e.g., Matt 11:27; Luke 10:22).\textsuperscript{65} This "encounter" (and the union with God's will it presumes) is the goal of all prayer, rather than the fulfilment of a request as such.\textsuperscript{66} For Cullmann, the "hearing" of a prayer by God is code for an existential relationship with God in the divine–human dialogue that is willed by God for his creatures to enter into freely. Once the divine–human dialogue is sought and entered into, the original petition loses its importance. Even the distinction between the prayer of faith and prayer according to God's will breaks down. Cullmann says of the requirement of faith in Mark 11:24 that,

\begin{quote}
This faith [that the disciples have already received what they ask for] is part of the conversation. The experience of the presence of God who sees and hears is already fulfilment.\textsuperscript{67}
\end{quote}

To pray "your will be done" means to pray at a more strenuous level of the prayer dialogue experience:

\begin{quote}
The strength needed to be ready to accept the rejection of any petition and even to pray that "God's will be done" is as great and as difficult to attain as the faith that Jesus requires of the disciples.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{63} Cullmann, \textit{Prayer}, 32. Cullmann here appears to be thinking of God's "will" as his purposes of salvation rather than his intentions generally. In general, Cullmann maintains, petitionary prayer teaching in the Synoptic Gospels can be broken into three groups: requests for material benefits (e.g., Matt 7:9–11), requests for spiritual benefits (e.g., Luke 18:10), and requests for help in material need (e.g., Gethsemane).

\textsuperscript{64} Cullmann, \textit{Prayer}, 32–33.

\textsuperscript{65} Cullmann, \textit{Prayer}, 33: "Jesus' union with the will of the Father in prayer is a model for all prayer because it is rooted in the character of prayer as dialogue. […] In any prayer the encounter of the creature with the Creator, quite apart from the fulfilment of any wishes, is already an attainment of the basic goal and all prayers must find a place in the framework of this encounter [without which] prayer becomes suspect of being a magic formula." "No prayer inspired by honest concern for union with God is excluded from God's will that we should pray to him […]" (133)

\textsuperscript{66} Cullmann, \textit{Prayer}, 34.

\textsuperscript{67} Cullmann, \textit{Prayer}, 19, emphasis added.
[...] It is infinitely difficult to add to an ardent prayer for deliverance from terrible distress the words "But not what I will." The power comes only by "seeking and finding a conversation, an encounter, with God in prayer." The divine–human dialogue appears, then, to be both the basis and the goal of petitionary prayer, with the depth of encounter increasing as one moves from petitions for things (Matthew 7:7–9) to petitions without doubt (Mark 11:23–24) and then finally to petitions according to God's will (Mark 14:36). The degree of union with God's will seems to be the determining factor. Jesus' union with God pre-existed Gethsemane, and yet it became the goal of Gethsemane with the fulfilment of the petition of secondary importance to the prayer encounter itself.

If this were all Cullmann had to say it would be tempting to see his conclusions supporting the arguments of those with whom he disagreed—since he has effectively sidelined petition at the expense of an existential prayer-dialogue encounter that stands above it. However, Cullmann moves on from the experiential to discuss the nature of the will of God to which Jesus (and others) submit. He says,

Certainly the wish expressed in the [Gethsemane] prayer is not fulfilled. But because it is combined with submission to God's will, the edge [of the theological problem?] is taken off this fact by its being illuminated by the light of the divine will which seeks our salvation. At this new level the prayer [in Gethsemane?] is heard.

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68 Cullmann, Prayer, 34.  
69 The encounter does not diminish with sin (Luke 18:15) or extreme suffering (Mark 15:34).  
70 Cullmann, Prayer, 34: "It is part of God's loving will that his creatures should also present their wishes to him, whether he can grant them or not, just as parents want their children to ask them trustingly for a gift, even if they are not certain of getting it." See also p. 136 for comments on Paul's unanswered prayer in 2 Cor 12:8–9: Paul, in accepting the "sufficiency" of God's grace "finds that his prayer is heard in not being heard."  
71 Cullmann, Prayer, 32, emphasis added. Cullmann's language here is not completely clear. Presumably, Jesus is being spoken about in all three sentences, but it is not impossible that the important central sentence could be a comment by Cullmann to the reader (hence our additional bracketed comments). If Jesus is being spoken about throughout the section, then Cullmann is in agreement with Koenig that something new was revealed to Jesus in Gethsemane—in Cullmann's case that the will of God was for the salvation of the world/believers, giving purpose to the anguish he faced. The use of the passive voice ("being illuminated") implies, however, Cullmann is thinking along the lines of the second alternative: Christians
What is this "salvation"? Cullmann's comment is directed by his understanding that God's plan of salvation distinguishes the constant (or, continuous) from the contingent. In his earlier book, *Salvation in History*, Cullmann says:

> From the human point of view, quite apart from man's sin, contingency belongs to the manner in which God's plan develops. In the Bible, the movement and purpose of the plan [i.e., continuity] are revealed at the start, but not the particular stages in it [i.e., contingencies].

Applying this to prayer he says,

> God has foreseen that [out of his love] his hearing of prayers granted in freedom will find a place in his plan of salvation by not abandoning his plan because of them but incorporating them into its development.

Therefore, the unheard Gethsemane prayer is "raised to the level where it is brought into the light of the divine plan of salvation and thus reaches a higher order in the sphere of being heard." Although the final resolution of this plan of salvation lies in the future, the "already–not yet" nature of salvation means that, in the context of present evil, enough has been unveiled for faith to be confidently placed in God for what is yet to be revealed.

Cullmann's advance with respect to the tension between promise and restriction on petitions—especially in the Synoptic Gospels—is to incorporate the "already–not yet" nature of New Testament eschatology more deliberately. He develops this further in his section on Paul, where he (correctly) ties the ministry of the Spirit in petition to this tension. Prayer is an "eschatological discourse" that brings the Christian into the "not yet" while, at the same time, highlighting the limitations of the human petitioner because their bodies are not yet redeemed. For Cullmann, Romans 8:26–27 address the way whereby the Spirit transcends the human inadequacies revealed by his presence, and moves the Christian past petition with words into the

should temper their prayer expectations in the knowledge of God's salvation of humankind in Christ.

76 Quotes come from Cullmann, *Prayer*, 72–80. The space devoted to Cullmann here does not reflect the detail of his exegesis.
Spirit-inspired experience of tongues, which is not petition as such but "sighing."\textsuperscript{77} Here, once again, it is not the prayer that is important but the encounter. Or, as Cullmann says with respect to 2 Corinthians 12:8, "power in weakness [is, in effect,] the divine presence through the Holy Spirit [which] amounts to being heard."\textsuperscript{78} Cullmann finds the same tune played in different keys across the New Testament.

In brief, Cullmann's treatment of the question of why the New Testament contains both promises to those who pray (with faith) and yet places limitations upon them revolves around the nature of all prayer as a dialogue. This dialogue is intended (by God) to lead to union with him, including a union of wills, which is the primary goal of prayer rather than the receiving of benefits. The condition that petitions are made according to God's will is not, therefore, an additional impost, but leads to the climax of the divine–human dialogue of prayer, which is itself contingently caught up in the salvation plan of God. The condition that petitions are to be made in accordance with God's will expresses the very essence of praying with undiluted faith; faith assumes God's goodness to the petitioner and hence ultimately rests on God's salvation plan for the individual.\textsuperscript{79}

Cullmann's analysis of New Testament petition is theologically and exegetically superior to previous treatments, particularly his work on the promise–limitation question. Furthermore, his coverage extends the discussion of the question in the Pauline and Synoptic material. Along the way, however, Cullmann's premise begins to drive his exegesis. For example, Cullmann's emphasis on the "dialogue" or "encounter" along with the "free union with God's will" has the effect of diminishing petitionary prayer as such. The petitions themselves are not the heart of the prayer but what they presume (i.e., the divine–human encounter). Cullmann does not appear to give petitionary prayer for self the kind of support one would expect from the opening chapter of the book where he critiqued those who diminish petition in favour of praise. It is notable that Jesus' unconditional prayer promise (Matt 7:7–8

\textsuperscript{77} Cullmann makes no comment here on the phrases of which Miller made so much, "as [we] ought" (καθό σει) and "according to the will of God" (κατὰ τὸ θεόν).

\textsuperscript{78} Cullmann, \textit{Prayer}, 86. Earlier he states, "[H]earing takes place through the presence of Christ in the very fact that [the petition for the removal of the thorn] has not been heard."

\textsuperscript{79} In the end, "faith must include submission to God's will in prayer." (Cullmann, \textit{Prayer}, 135). And, again: "It is possible for human beings to fall in with God's will only if the faith which Jesus requires of them is unshakable, […] faith that God's goodness is […] infinitely greater than that of human beings [...]." (136).
par. Luke 11:9–10)—which is radical by any standard—is not given a great deal of space. On another issue, Cullmann's presentation of Jesus' Gethsemane prayer suffers from a lack of attention to the aspects that are unique to Jesus and the aspects that are not. Cullmann hints at this difference when he notes that the clauses "if it is possible" and "not what I will but what you will," "presuppose[s] that a deep inward unity of will between Jesus and God already exists" (cf. Matt 11:25–26). This aspect of the union is unique to Jesus. The question to ask, however, is what aspects pertain to his followers? This then leads to the issue of how petition, suffering, and God's plan are integrated into the life of prayer for the disciple. Nevertheless, Cullmann has laid a very good foundation—both exegetically and theologically—that will provide sound guidance in the present investigation.

**e. David Crump**

*Knocking on Heaven's Door: A New Testament Theology of Petitionary Prayer* is written with an eye to the modern Christian who is confronted with a variety of suggestions on how to pray successfully. Crump aims to "unravel [the] Gordian knot of practical theology" that surrounds why some prayers are answered and others are not. He begins with texts from the Synoptic Gospels that conceivably place a restriction upon petition, before moving to the Lord's Prayer, the Johannine material, Acts, Paul, and the rest of the New Testament. Since the following chapters of this thesis include detailed interaction with sections of Crump's book, it is necessary only to outline here his overall argument and conclusions.

Crump concludes his first section (about restrictive texts in the Synoptic Gospels) by noting that the "amoral conditions" of persistence and faith "have [no] relative bearing on the value of a disciple's petitions to the Father, unlike such inappropriate attitudes as selfishness or a disregard for others [i.e., 'moral

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80 It does not appear in Cullmann's closing ten-point summary on pp. 143–144.
81 The use of John 4:34 in the discussion (Cullmann, *Prayer*, 154, n. 40) creates more confusion by introducing the notion of an incarnational Christology (34).
82 See earlier citation in n. 8. The writer thanks Dr Crump for providing a copy of his book soon after publication and for the encouragement to pursue this thesis topic.
83 Crump, *Petitionary Prayer*, 16.
Rather, faith and persistence are marks of real Christianity for without them one cannot pray at all. Non-answers to prayer should not be attributed to lack of faith or persistence but to the freedom of God to act out of "concern for his own divine honour and by his accomplishing what he knows to be the good." Here Crump takes a well-worn path into theology. It is not that one could not find pertinent texts to make this point, but they are not offered here.

The Lord's Prayer provides for Crump a place where the "ask/surrender tension is presented most starkly." When it comes to dealing with this tension within the central prayer of Christianity, Crump rightly notes that the two halves of the Lord's Prayer (the "you" and the "we" petitions) should not be separated but caught within the cosmic purposes of God's salvation plan. Like Miller, Crump says that God's glory, kingdom, and will must be given priority over the needs of his children and yet the petitions of his children are welcomed. He expresses the question of the relationship between God's sovereignty and human need in these words:

Prayer remains an open-ended exploration of new horizons waiting to be outlined by the cooperative initiatives shared between a Father who waits to hear and the children who venture to ask.

This response (which can be found in other places and in his conclusion) is not grounded in the exegesis of the respective sections but is delivered by way of application of material to the everyday prayer-lives of readers.

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85 Crump, *Petitionary Prayer*, 91. The "moral conditions" are located by Crump in the Catholic Epistles and Revelation. He summarizes these on pp. 276–277: failure to ask (Jas 4:2), asking selfishly (Jas 4:3), asking foolishly rather than wisely (Jas 1:5), asking from a position of disobedience, asking when out of fellowship with one's Christian community (Jas 4:2–3; 5:14–16a) or family (1 Pet 3:7). However, these conditions are not integrated into an overall understanding of petition within the NT, or even within James (e.g., Jas 1:5–8).

86 Crump (33–34) appears to have over-limited the qualification of mutual forgiveness in Mark 11:25. He ties it into James 4:2–3 and 5:15–16, but separates the individual from the community more than is warranted. See exegesis in ch. VII below.

87 Crump, *Petitionary Prayer*, 93.

88 In a distinctive twist, Crump, *Petitionary Prayer*, 92, notes that Jesus, who is consistently presented as the model believer in the Synoptic Gospels, continues (in his ascended state) as the mediator of all prayer, giving confidence to later petitioners. Cf. Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, esp. 154–241.


Turning to the Pauline material, Crump (like Cullmann and Koenig) notes that the Spirit’s presence in prayer means that no prayer is wasted and that communion with God has taken place and "the believer has experienced something new about divine guidance and the Spirit’s work within." He also correctly highlights the eschatological context of Pauline prayer: there is an urgency about prayer in the present age. Nevertheless, Crump sees Paul (and Jesus) minimizing daily needs or requests for self in the overall drift of petitionary prayer in the New Testament. Indeed, like the previous writers, Crump sees petition as a step along the way to maturity rather than as an end in itself.

Of the four scholars surveyed, Crump has written the most detailed exegetical study. And yet, in targeting texts that have been misused and/or overlooked, Crump has given much attention to some texts (e.g., the Lord’s Prayer [three chapters plus appendices]) but casual attention to others (e.g., a few pages on the unconditional prayer promise of Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13). The prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane is also given relatively little attention. Crump is not aiming at the struggle of how to integrate promise and limitation within the books and corpora of the New Testament but rather the practical and theological consequences of what happens when this tension falls out of balance. However, the pastoral/theological concerns of the book virtually take over its conclusion, which posits questions about the function of prayer with respect to the doctrine of God, as well as reiterating the important observation of Cullmann about praying "between the times," including unexplained suffering that is used by God for his own glory.

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95 Crump, *Petitionary Prayer*, 251: "Petition and intercession provide a way for groaning to be transformed into worship, for despair to give birth to hope, for frustration to melt into peace, and for earthly failure to metamorphose into spiritual victory."
96 Perhaps this is due to his self-confessed bias toward the "Reformed end of the [theological] spectrum" (Crump, *Petitionary Prayer*, 17), but the present writer places himself there as well and so the weight of this rationale is weakened somewhat.
f. Conclusions for the Study
With respect to the tension between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer, several threads may be highlighted from the survey above. Firstly, with respect to the restrictions, and to unanswered prayers in general, the scholars surveyed offered the following conclusions: Christians are meant to "subordinate" their suffering to the will of God or the kingdom of God rather than petition God about it (Miller; Koenig); Jesus and others learned something "new" about their role in the divine plan of salvation as they faced unanswered prayer (Koenig, Crump) or engaged in the dialogue of prayer (Koenig, Cullmann, Crump); and, union with the will of God is the ultimate aim of prayer not "answers" (Cullmann). Miller also argued that intercession for the suffering of others lay at the heart of Christian prayer and not petition for one's own needs. With respect to the frequent promises to petition, especially prayer for everyday things, the scholars surveyed concluded that: one must be careful not to take these promises at face value (Miller); only prayers in accordance with God's will (however that may be defined) can be assured of answer (Miller, Cullmann, Crump); answers to prayer depend on the persistence and pure desire of the petitioner (Koenig; Crump); and, God's will and plan are more important matters for prayer than material benefits (Cullmann).

The most common solution to the tension between promises and limitations in New Testament petitionary prayer among the scholars surveyed is to argue that the will of God overrides the individual's request. That is, unanswered prayer is due to the divine purposes being different to the petitioner's desire. While this solution is popular it has tended to inhibit further investigation—what, after all, can gainsay the will of God? The strength of the case is obvious in the Gethsemane prayer account (Mark 14:36 par. Matt 26:39. 42; Luke 22:42; cf. Matt 6:10; 1 John 5:14 and Rom 8:26–27), but three questions may be raised about this "solution" as a whole: (1) what is the nature of the "will of God"? How is the expression defined within the context and/or corpus in which it occurs? (2) What is the theological significance of the large quantity of prayer promises found within the New Testament? Even if

some appearances are echoing earlier/other traditions, the fact that they recur is
testimony to their relevance and vitality within the early Christian recollection of
Jesus' prayer sayings. (3) What can be made of those books or corpora that contain
both promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer? If the will of God
"trumps" the desire of the individual petitioner, why include the promises in the first
place? How can they be reconciled within these texts or corpora and then how can
they be integrated within the New Testament as a whole?

If a cause for these solutions is sought, the answer is partly found in a lack of
consideration of the question from the ground up. That is, most studies consider the
relevant texts primarily from a theological or systematic angle rather than
independently within their literary context or corpus. However, it is not that the
studies surveyed above have been completely off-track. Indeed, most of the themes
of the present study have been raised in some way by previous research: the
"already–not yet" nature of much New Testament eschatology and the dynamic
presence of the kingdom of God in and through prayer (Cullmann, Crump); the place
of faith, forgiveness, and community relations in relation to prayer (all scholars); and
the central place of Jesus and the Spirit in petition, especially in the midst of
suffering (Koenig, Cullmann, Crump). However, while this list will provide a series
of guide posts along the way, they are all areas that will benefit from further analysis.

Two things emerge from the above survey for the present study. First, it would
appear that scholars have difficulty integrating both promises to and limitations upon
petitionary prayer within a unified framework. Tensions that are admitted are
frequently resolved in favour of restriction and the will of God rather than promise to
petition and God's generosity to his children. Second, no study has attempted to
consistently examine the main New Testament material on promises to and
limitations upon petitionary prayer from within the literary and historical contexts of
the prayer sayings themselves. In these two points lie the aim of the study, as well as
its method and scope. The aim can be expressed as follows: To investigate the
relationship of promises to petition (for self) and restrictions upon such petition
within the New Testament and to consider how these may be integrated into a
theology of petitionary prayer.
C. The Scope, Structure, and Method of the Study

Now that the aim of the study has been determined, it remains to consider its scope and method. In the light of the discussion above, three rules have been applied to ensure a study of sufficient breadth and depth to produce tangible results: (1) the study must include the most significant texts for the question at hand (e.g., Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane, the Lord's Prayer, etc.) and examine them within their literary and theological contexts to determine their meaning; (2) the study must be representative of the New Testament as a whole. That is, the study must cover the majority of the New Testament voices. (3) The study must include texts or corpora that clearly embrace both promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer within the same book or corpus. This rule will both close a significant research gap and also ensure that integration between the promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer takes place along the way. Conclusions drawn in each segment will then be able to be pulled together in the final synthesis of the study.

Using the above rules, the following New Testament "voices" and texts have been selected in order of treatment in the study:

1. The Synoptic Gospels

2. The Johannine Literature and the Catholic Epistles
   b. The Letter of James (Jas 1:5–8; 4:2–3; 5:13–18)

3. The Pauline Corpus
   a. An overview of Pauline petitionary prayer, including the prayer promise in Philippians (Phil 4:6–7) and the role of the Spirit in prayer (Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15–16)
   b. The intercession of the Spirit in prayer (esp. Romans 8:26–27)
c. Paul’s threefold plea to the Lord (2 Cor 12:7–10).\(^9^9\)

The Synoptic Gospels contain the clearest witness to the tension between petitioner prayer and its limitations. This section is the longest part of the study and will form its heart (Part One; chs. II–V). Part Two will cover the Gospel of John and the Letter of James (chs. VI–VII). These two texts have been chosen from a wider group (including Hebrews, Revelation, Acts, 1 John, etc.), partly because of their distinctiveness within the New Testament (and from each other) and partly because of their resonance with the Synoptic prayer-promise pattern. Part Three is reserved for the other major voice within the New Testament, the apostle Paul (chs. VIII–XI). The first chapter of this part will establish the framework of Pauline petitioner prayer (ch. VIII) and the next two chapters will treat two texts frequently offered as limitations to petition in Paul (chs. IX, X). The conclusions on the Synoptic Gospels and the Pauline Corpus are gathered together in their own chapters (V, XI) and the study as a whole is concluded in Chapter XII.

In view of the varieties of texts and genres under review, as well as the previous work done on New Testament petitioner prayer, this study has employed both literary and historical analysis in its exegesis. In an attempt to place texts within their respective theological frameworks, a "whole-book" approach has on occasions been used. The study will at times offer thoughts about New Testament prayer within its time as well as deal with issues of a more trans-historical nature. The overall aim, however, is to uncover consistently repeating patterns, frameworks, and relevant features about the tension between promises to and restrictions upon New Testament petitioner prayer so as to draw a whole picture.

In brief, this thesis is a study of petitioner prayer within the New Testament with a special focus on the relationship between promises to and limitations upon petitioner prayer. The study will focus on core sections and texts of the New Testament that clearly exhibit the features under discussion. This study moves beyond previous research in focus and depth, and expects to make a contribution to both New Testament scholarship and pastoral practice.

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\(^9^9\) Texts left out from the study include: Heb 4:14–16; 5:7; 1 Pet 3:7; 5:7; 1 John 3:22; 5:14, 15; Rev 5:8; 8:2–3; cf. 6:9.
PART ONE: THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

II. THE LORD’S PRAYER

A. Introduction to Part One

The tension between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer reaches a high point in the Synoptic Gospels. Amidst a wide variety of prayer material are found the most open promises (e.g., Matt 7:7 par. Luke 11:9) and the most restrictive limitations (e.g., Mark 14:36 par. Matt 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42). The striking thing about this contrast is that both extremes are attributed by the gospel writers to the one person, Jesus of Nazareth. Moreover, on at least some occasions, it would appear that the prayers and prayer teachings of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels have influenced other parts of the New Testament (compare Matt 7:7; 21:21–22 with Jas 1:5–6; John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26, 27). It is appropriate, therefore, to follow the majority of studies on New Testament petitionary prayer by beginning this examination of New Testament petitionary prayer with the Synoptic Gospels.¹

The prayer teachings and prayers of Jesus found in the Synoptic Gospels that relate to the thesis question are reasonably clear and may be allowed to form the bulk of this part of the work. At the centre of the question—and of all Synoptic prayer, if not all New Testament prayer—stands the Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9–13 par. Luke 11:2b–4). This prayer not only appears to both restrict and promise answers to petition, but is also presented as Jesus’ model prayer to the disciples. That is, in citing Jesus’ teaching on how to pray it implies success in such prayer.

The Lord’s Prayer has, of course, been extensively studied. The intention in the present chapter is not to rehearse the whole history of interpretation, but to use this prayer as window into the tension between promises to petition and limitations upon it in the Synoptic Gospels. From here the following two chapters treat the explicit prayer promises of Jesus (Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13; Mark 9:28–29 par. Matt 17:19–20; Mark 11:22–25 par. 21:21–22) and Jesus’ Gethsemane prayer (Mark 14:32–42 par. Matt 26:36–46; Luke 22:39–46)—considered by many to illustrate the strongest condition upon petition to be found in the New Testament. Chapter V lays out the conclusions for the thesis topic from the preceding exegetical chapters.

Determining the witness of the Synoptic Gospels on any theme is a complex task. The approach used here embraces both the final form of the text and the meaning of the sayings within their literary and theological contexts. Historical enquiry is part of this process, but on occasions a precise socio-historical context is difficult to ascertain (e.g., the prayer promises, which are without clear parallels). The prayer sayings of Jesus have been given recent attention in an effort to ascertain a clearer picture of the historical Jesus and/or the communities that lay behind the gospels.² Both of these aspects are important, but the wide-ranging nature of the

investigation as a whole prevents their thorough examination. As indicated in the introductory chapter, a more general approach to the texts has been selected—one that could be applied across the wide range of witnesses—which will hopefully produce a more consistent set of results for the investigation.  

B. Introduction to the Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9–13; Luke 11:2b–4; Did. 8.2) is the most significant prayer within the New Testament and the history of Christianity. Aside from its measured and pithy petitions that cover almost every area of Christian thought and life, the prayer is the only one taught by Jesus that is recorded in the gospels. It is


Use of "Matthew," "Mark," or "Luke," to refer to the writers of the gospels under their name is not intended as a statement of their authorship but as a convenient way of referring to a distinctive writer or composer of a work.

rightly considered to be a summary of his thought and prayer priorities, if not of the whole of his preaching.\(^5\)

The Lord's Prayer is presented as both a prayer and a prayer instruction by Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels.\(^6\) In addition, the tension between the promises to


\(^6\) Cullmann, *Prayer*, 37: "The Our Father gives an application of [Jesus'] instructions on prayer." Matthew's version is introduced with the imperative προσεύχοιτε, and Luke's version with λέγετε. It would appear, however, that Luke's version is intended to be said word for word (Luke 11:2a, ὅταν προσεύχησθε λέγετε ["whenever you pray say"]).
petitioners and the limitations placed upon them is part and parcel of the prayer.⁷ A common solution to this tension is to posit a theological priority in the order of the petitions,⁸ that is, that the first three petitions govern the second three. Is this a valid conclusion or should the tension be a little more balanced? These questions lie at the heart of this chapter and necessitate a more thorough examination of the whole prayer.

The literary contexts of the versions of the Lord's Prayer differ in Matthew and Luke. In Matthew's Gospel it is centrally located within the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 6:9–13), following the second of three pithy instructions on "doing righteousness" (v. 1, alms, prayer, and fasting; Matt 6:2–4, 5–6, 16–18, respectively).⁹ The section as a whole is marked by a repeated pattern, which stresses that personal piety should be lived in the Father's invisible presence and not before human beings. The Lord's Prayer (vv. 9–13) is encased by two further prayer instructions (vv. 7–8, 14–15). The first unit (vv. 7–8) contrasts true prayer with manipulative prayer methods found among the Gentiles.¹⁰ The disciples' heavenly Father knows the needs of those who ask him in advance and so can be asked without pretence or exaggeration; that is, God is trustworthy and all-knowing. Verses 7–8 introduce prayer terminology used in the prayer instructions in the Sermon on the Mount (7:7–11; αἰτεῖν, and therefore implying, διδόναι found in the Lord's Prayer). The unit stresses the reliability and goodness of the Father, which are fundamental to all petitionary prayer. The final instruction of the Matthean prayer unit (vv. 14–15) concerns mutual forgiveness among disciples and is probably

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⁷ The third petition of the Matthean version of the Lord's Prayer asks that "your will be done" (Matt 6:10, γενηθήτω τὸ θέλημά σου) and the following one specifically asks God to "Give us today/each day our daily bread." Some kind of compromise must be made if both are to be taken as read.

⁸ So Miller, Biblical Prayer, 321–322, 331–333: "The intent and effect of these petitions are to subordinate all prayer to the will and purpose of God" (331). See also Birger Gerhardsson, "The Matthean Version of the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9b–13): Some Observations," in The New Testament Age: Essays in Honour of Bo Reicke (ed. W. C. Weinrich; 2 vols.; Macon, Ga.: Mercer, 1984), 214, "Before the followers of Jesus pray for their most pressing personal needs they are to open their minds to the great perspective, to express their uncompromised solidarity with God and his cause by praying for the final sanctifying of the divine name, the coming of the reign of heaven on earth and the definitive realisation of the divine purposes."

⁹ See, e.g., Betz, Sermon, 330–349, for discussion of genre, parallels, and origin of this section, which he terms a "cultic didache."

intended as an expansion of the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer—mercy and forgiveness are related Matthean themes (5:7, 9, 23–26, 43–48; 8:13; 18:21–35; etc.). The literary context of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, therefore, belongs squarely in discipleship instruction about the manner, motives, and content of true piety.

In Luke's Gospel, the Lord's Prayer occurs as part of a dedicated prayer section (Luke 11:1–13). The Lord's Prayer (vv. 2b–4) stands at the head of the whole section. It is followed by the Parable of the Friend at Midnight (vv. 5–8) and the Lukan version of the prayer promises ("ask, and it shall be given to you," vv. 9–13). The Lord's Prayer is directly linked to a note about Jesus' own prayer practice (11:1–2a). Prayer notations (i.e., 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 29–29; 11:1; 22:39; note also 10:21, 22; 22:31, 32) are a Lukan feature and have a number of functions within the gospel.

This one (11:1)—and probably a number of others (e.g., 3:21; 5:16; 22:39 within vv. 40–46; note also vv. 31–32)—point to Jesus as an example of prayer. The Lukan Gethsemane episode makes this even clearer with the comment that Jesus went to the garden to pray "habitually" (κατὰ τὸ ἑος, Luke 22:39). The conclusion from all this in Luke 11:1–2a is that, "[t]he disciples seek a prayer that will express the distinctive piety that Jesus' own life has expressed and into which he..."

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11 Luke not only multiplies the Markan prayer notations (Mark 1:35; 6:44) of Jesus at prayer (Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28, 29; 11:1; [22:31–32]; 22:39), but places these at critical moments in Jesus' ministry (e.g., his baptism and transfiguration). These notations have been the subject of much discussion, but no one theme seems to dominate. In some of the notations, Jesus is presented as an example of regular and intimate prayer (esp., 5:16; 6:12; 11:1; 22:39; cf. 4:16), intentionally retiring to remote or mountainous locations to pray (5:16; 6:12; 9:28; 22:39). This preference for isolation appears to be strongly linked to his mission (4:1–13; 4:42–44). The first prayer notation at Jesus' baptism may have a paradigmatic function, directing readers' to connect the people of Israel (3:21, "all the people") with Jesus' mission (3:22), ultimately pointing to the cross, as Kyu Sam Han, "Theology of Prayer in the Gospel of Luke," JETS 43 (2000): 675–696, correctly notes. Jesus' potential entrapment by fame or destruction by the local leadership also appears to lead him to prayer (5:16; 6:12). A new Israel seems to be the subject of Jesus' prayer mentioned in Luke 6:12 (see vv. 13–16), leading to a new covenant mandate in 6:20–49; see Raymond E. Brown, "The Pater Noster as an Eschatological Prayer," TS 22 (1961): 181. Luke 9:18, 28, 29, show that Jesus' prayers are connected to his mission and to his disciples (who have now begun to witness his prayer), leading to the present prayer notation in which they wish to pray like he does. See Crump, Jesus the Intercessor, 21–48, 109–153, for further thoughts on the Christological impact of the notations and prayer in Luke.

has drawn the disciple band." Jesus answers that one may be bold in prayer to God who is ready and willing to answer. In both Matthew and Luke, then, the Lord's Prayer is deeply connected both to Jesus' mission and to his example of prayer and teaching about God's generous character.

C. Exegesis

1. The Versions and Structure of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and Luke

The Matthean and Lukan versions of the Lord's Prayer are reproduced below.

Exactly agreed wording in both versions is underlined; equivalent (but inexact) agreed wording is italicised. The number at the end of each petition refers to which petition it is. The petitions of both versions are numbered according to the Matthean order; there is no third petition in the Lukan version.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>9 Πάτερ ἡμῶν ὃ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς. ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ἱδνομα σου: [1]</td>
<td>2 Πάτερ. ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ἱδνομα σου: [1]</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;We-Petitions&quot;</td>
<td>11 τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δός ἡμῖν σήμερον [4]</td>
<td>12 καὶ ὁφελήσῃ ἡμᾶς τὰ ὁφειλήσαντά ἡμῶν. ὃς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὁφειλέταις ἡμῶν. [5]</td>
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<td>12 καὶ ὁφειλήσῃ ἡμᾶς τὰ ὁφειλήσαντά ἡμῶν. ὃς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὁφειλέταις ἡμῶν. [5]</td>
<td>13 καὶ μὴ εἰσενέχῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν. [6a]</td>
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<td>13 καὶ μὴ εἰσενέχῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν. [6a]</td>
<td>14 καὶ μὴ εἰσενέχῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν. [6a]</td>
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14 D* a b c k bo; Tert Cyp omit ὃς thereby turning the petition into a request for God's will to be done both on earth and in heaven.
15 Apart from concluding doxologies, the Matthean version of the Lord's Prayer has no other textual variants of note.
16 This text is based on 75 B L 1 vg sy; Mcion Or. Aside from the third Matthean petition inserted here (with variants), there is a widely discussed variant for the second "you-petition." Instead of ἔλθετω ἡ βασιλεία σου, Marcion, Gregory-Nyssa and Maximus (apart from the ἔφ’ ἡμᾶς) read ἔλθετω τὸ πνεῦμά σου τὸ
Matthew's version has fifty-seven words and Luke's has thirty-eight. The versions agree word for word on two petitions ([1], [2]) and partly agree on two other petitions ([4], [6a]). They share vocabulary in two more petitions (remainder of [4] and [5]). Matthew's version has an additional petition ([3]) and an additional half petition ([6b]). Aside from the additional petitions ([3] and [6b]) and more traditional address ([1]) of Matthew, both versions display precise to very strong agreement on five out of six petitions. Of the two petitions in which variations occur (i.e., [4] and [5]) it is of interest to note that they both begin in the same way.

These are relatively minor differences and both versions will be examined simultaneously to obtain the respective nuances. The overall structure is the same for both versions of the Lord's Prayer: (1) address (or, invocation, Matt 6:9a par. Luke 11:2b); (2) "you-petitions" (Matt 7:9b–11 par. Luke 11:2c); and, (3) "we-petitions" (Matt 6:12–13 par. Luke 11:3–4).

The exegesis will follow this structure and draw conclusions at the end of each section of the Lord's Prayer. Before this is

\[\delta\gamma\iota\iota\omicron\ \varepsilon\phi^{'}\ \eta\mu\alpha\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \kappa\alpha\theta\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\alpha\tau\omega\ \eta\mu\alpha\varsigma\ ("let your holy spirit come upon us and cleanse us").\] D and it\(^{a}\) have \(\varepsilon\phi^{'}\ \eta\mu\alpha\varsigma\) at the end of \(\varepsilon\lambda\theta\epsilon\tau\omega\ \eta\ \beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha\ \sigma\ou\) that may testify to the antiquity of this reading. The most likely reasons for this variant is its use as an alternative prayer for baptisms—or some other liturgical occasion within the early church (Nolland, \textit{Luke}, 610)—and its resonance with the prominent Lukan theme of the Spirit and the Christian. The variant has had a strong following in scholarship—see Carruth and Garsky, \textit{Q 11:2b-4}, 3–18—but should not be entertained. See Oakman, "The Lord's Prayer," 142–144, for summary and evaluation of variants.

Matthew 6:13 should be read as one petition and not two. Whether v. 13b is regarded as additional to any posited original version, the adversative \(\delta\alpha\lambda\alpha\) indicates antithesis to v. 13a and hence both petitions should be read together.

The end-of-line rhyme (\(\sigma\ou\) in the "you-petitions", \(\eta\mu\omega\nu\) in the "we-petitions") is not common in classical Greek poetry and may reflect an Aramaic original. See the detailed study of rhyme in Jewish prayer literature from the OT onward by Karl Georg Kuhn, \textit{Achtzehngebet und Vaterunser und der Reim} (WUNT 1/1; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1950), for its significance for the Lord's Prayer.

Gerhardsson, "Matthean Version." 209–210. Lohmeyer, \textit{The Lord's Prayer}, 26–27, noted that if the address is removed, the lines of both versions form a balanced structure around the petition for bread (i.e., [4]). The first and second petitions balance the two-part sixth and the third balances the fifth. The fourth petition uses a delayed imperative and has a different syntax from the preceding and following petitions, and perhaps this is deliberate. Lohmeyer's structure has not been followed in subsequent scholarship, though see the concentric structure of Ulrich Luz, \textit{Matthew 1–7: A Continental Commentary} (trans. Wilhelm C. Linss; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 212.
done, however, a comment needs to be made on whether—and to what extent—the Lord's Prayer is an eschatologically-oriented prayer.

2. The Lord's Prayer: An Eschatological Plea?
One of the perennial questions about the Lord's Prayer is the extent to which it looks to the end time rather than to the here and now.20 The eschatological view of the Lord's Prayer has gained its momentum from three conclusions: (1) that, in the fourth petition ("give us today our daily bread"), the word ἐπιόντιονς means "bread for the morrow" (i.e., it will be eaten in the final kingdom of God) and not bread to be consumed in the here and now (i.e., a synecdoche for food); (2) that περισσείας in the final petition refers not to daily temptation/testing but to the final test of the Great Tribulation; and, (3) that the first three petitions (in Matthew, but two in Luke) concern future hopes and not present hopes.21 The first two conclusions are best left until the detailed exegesis below, but the last one needs to be aired now as it is the basis of the whole argument for an eschatologically slanted Lord's Prayer and therefore of a prioritised order of the petitions.

Interpreting the first three petitions eschatologically has rested upon three pillars, the first of which is their parallel form, probably deriving from an Aramaic or


Hebrew Vorlage. Apart from the adverbial qualifier of the third petition (ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς, "as in heaven, so also upon earth")\(^{22}\), the first three petitions display matching word order (third person, singular, imperative verb + object + second person, singular, possessive pronoun), the same verb tense, and the same syllable count in Greek (10, 9, 10).\(^{23}\) Some have argued that, if the Lukan number and length of petitions is correct (i.e., no third petition existed), then the first two petitions were delivered in parallel form. It is then argued that the second petition—which is thought to be clearly future (i.e., referring to the coming of the kingdom)—colours the first petition, making both lines future-oriented.\(^{24}\) Parallelism—especially Semitic parallelism that lies behind the present form—is not, however, a simple phenomenon of \(A=B\).\(^{25}\) Moreover, even if the parallelism argument is granted, it only holds good for the first half of the prayer; the "we-petitions" are not in parallel form but linked by parataxis.\(^{26}\)

The second pillar of the argument for an eschatological interpretation of the "you-petitions" is that they all use the aorist imperative, a form, according to this view, best understood in the \(\text{Einmaligkeit}\) sense, that is, as a once-only event that affects all history.\(^{27}\) The petitions request, then, that God would once and for all time sanctify his name, fully and finally bring his kingdom, and do his will for all creation as it is done in heaven.\(^{28}\) However, since the time that Jeremias\(^{29}\) and Brown argued for the eschatological sense of the first three petitions, the impact of linguistics on the nature of the Greek verb has progressed substantially.\(^{30}\) The primary category by

\(^{22}\) Some interpreters consider this clause to apply to the first three petitions; see Betz, \(\text{Sermon}\), 376–377, 395, for references.
\(^{23}\) Ayo, \(\text{The Lord's Prayer}\), 51, cited in Neyrey, \(\text{Give God the Glory}\), 67.
\(^{24}\) This is the overall thrust of Kuhn, \(\text{Achtzehengebet}\), but also see Meier, \(\text{A Marginal Jew}\), 291, 292–293: "All these linguistic phenomena, plus the fact that the two lines make up the whole of the first main part of the prayer, suggest that these two parallel lines, if not completely synonymous, certainly go together and help explain each another" (293).
\(^{26}\) Nolland, \(\text{Matthew}\), 287.
\(^{27}\) Brown, "Pater Noster," 191: "[O]ne supreme moment rather than a gradual process." Brown is clearly operating within the \(\text{Aktionsart}\) view of Greek tenses.
\(^{29}\) Jeremias, \(\text{Prayers}\), 98–99.
\(^{30}\) Buist M. Fanning, \(\text{Verbal Aspect in New Testament Greek}\) (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 1–6, has a brief history of the study of "aspect"; see Stanley E. Porter, \(\text{Verbal}
which to analyse the Greek verb has been found to be not its time indication or the kind of action (Ger. Aktionsart) to which it refers, but its aspect. The aspect of a verb shows how a writer/speaker of Greek "views each event or activity he mentions in relation to its context." Although discussion of verbs within an aspectual grammar continues apace in scholarship, it would be generally agreed that the aorist tense conveys a perfective aspect and is therefore used to depict an activity pure and simple, that is, as a totality. When it comes to the imperative, most scholars (not just those who have argued for the aspectual nature of the verb) say that present imperatives are used for general precepts (frequently concerning attitudes, e.g., moral change) and aorist imperatives are used for specific cases. The aorist imperative, "involves a specific agent performing an action within a specific situation" and the present imperative involves "situations in general." In the

Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood (SBG 1; New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 17–76, for a more detailed introduction to the topic. According to Constantine R. Campbell, "Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament: Non-Indicative Verbs in Narrative," (Unpublished Manuscript, 2007), 12–13, Aktionsart is a pragmatic category of a verb and therefore secondary to its semantics, which is expressed aspectually.


McKay, A New Syntax, 27. Porter, Verbal Aspect, 88: "Greek verbal aspect is a synthetic category (realised in the forms of verbs) used of meaningful oppositions in a network of tense systems to grammaticalise the author's reasoned subjective choice of conception of a process."

Campbell, "Verbal Aspect in the Non-Indicative," passim; Constantine R. Campbell, Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament (SBG 13; New York: Peter Lang, 2007); Fanning, Verbal Aspect; McKay, A New Syntax, 27–38; Porter, Verbal Aspect.

McKay, A New Syntax, 30. Fanning, Verbal Aspect, 97: "The aorist presents an occurrence in summary, viewed as a whole from the outside, with no regard for the internal make-up of the occurrence" (emphasis original).

BDF, §335, followed by Fanning, Verbal Aspect, 326–379.

Campbell, "Verbal Aspect in the Non-Indicative," 110, 117. Porter, Verbal Aspect, 351–360, argues that the aorist imperative treats the command "as a complete process," which is agreed by all, but then says that the present imperative is used when the command is specified in some way by the context (here thinking of the progress of the action). Porter shows that both aorist and present imperatives are used generally and specifically, but resolves the anomalies contextually not linguistically. Campbell, "Verbal Aspect in the Non-Indicative," 120–121, argues
ancient world, petitions were usually made to the gods using the aorist imperative (or substitute).  

Explanations for this phenomenon vary, but the "specific–general" rule can be seen to apply as long as it is borne in mind that an aorist imperative does not mean once-only, but a specific request in a specific situation. The Lord's Prayer (introduced generally with the present imperative: Luke 11:2 [λέγετε]; Matt 6:9 [προσεύχεσθε]) is to be prayed with the same intent and specificity every day.  

The upshot of all this is that the use of aorist imperatives in the Lord's Prayer makes no statement about whether the prayer is intended in a final eschatological way. What it does say is that the prayer is prayed with real desire and dependence upon the heavenly Father at the moment it is offered.  

A third pillar of the eschatological view—alluded to above—is that because the second petition for the coming of the kingdom is both clearer and more pronounced than the other "you-petitions," it should take precedence over the others.  

This conclusion appears to be reached on the basis of already formed opinions and not the analysis of the text or its contexts. There is no question that the second petition that, at this point, the particular verb lexeme takes over; some verbs, for example, predominantly take the present form when the aorist would be contextually expected (e.g., verbs of propulsion in which a process is conceived). This falls in line with the aspects in the indicative forms of the verb (122–123). The use of the present in Luke 11:3 (δίδου) is a case in point.  


In a private communication (12 November 2007), Dr Campell says: "I think one key element that can be overlooked in discussions about aspect is that [it] has to do with portrayal more than concrete reality. If a 'specific' command or request is made, that doesn't mean that the same request is not made every day. That's why I think the aorist in prayers can be specific, without taking away the sense that it may represent an ongoing desire. We could pray the Lord's prayer [sic] every day, representing ongoing desires, but each day it is a 'specific' request." McKay, "Aspect in Imperatival Constructions," 211, would agree with this. In reference to the anomaly between the Matthean and Lukan versions of the fourth petition for bread, he remarks that although the Lukan version has the present δίδου with τῷ κοθ’ ἡμέραν, implying repetition, "[…] the aorist could have been used to signal the completeness of each act of giving requested."  

Gerhardsson, "Matthean Version," 211, is so confident in this that he begins with the second petition in his exegesis and says: "This petition is enclosed by the petitions regarding God's name and will. The perfect formal symmetry and the connection by asyndeton make it natural to understand these petitions as parallel to one another for God's reign."
looms large in Jesus' proclamation, but the exaltation of the Name of God and the necessity to keep it from all that is impure is also a reasonably clear motive in Jesus' teaching (e.g., Matt 5:33–37) and actions (e.g., Matt 21:1–17 and pars.). It would be hard to make a case against the view that sanctifying the Name of the Lord takes priority over all other "you-petitions." The point is that one is able to elevate some "you-petitions" over others only upon a theological presupposition.

From the above arguments it may be concluded that the eschatological view of the first three petitions does not appear to be as persuasive as its adherents claim. Moreover, the eschatological interpretation of the Lord's Prayer has led to an overly restrictive interpretation. This is not to say that eschatology per se may be excluded from the intention of the prayer—that would be to swing the pendulum too far in the other direction. Nevertheless, enough has been said here to argue that the eschatological view should not be used as the sole guide to the Lord's Prayer.

42 See section C.4.a below.
43 Perhaps the most telling admission of the weakness of the eschatological position comes from one of its leading proponents, Gerhardsson, "Matthean Version," 213, who says: "[I]f these three petitions are so similar in effect, are not two of them superfluous? Has not the principle of avoiding verbosity ([Matt 6]vv 7–8) been forgotten in the Matthaean [sic.] expansion of the Lord's Prayer? The objection is not, I think, entirely unjustified. The third element—that concerning the divine will—adds little to what has been said in the previous two."
44 A non-eschatological Jesus has been unsuccessfully proposed by The Jesus Seminar and a number of its members. It is not necessary to review their proposals here; see, e.g., N. T. Wright, Jesus and the Victory of God (COQG 2; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 28–82). Marius Reiser, Jesus and Judgment: The Eschatological Proclamation in Its Jewish Context (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 6, states the position well: "The noneschatological Jesus is a phantom and a product of wishful thinking."
3. Address

Matt 6:9a: πάτερ ἡμῶν ὃ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
Luke 11:2b: πάτερ

a. Introduction

The Old Testament refers only about a dozen times to God as "father" (e.g., Deut 32:6; Ps 103:13–14; Jer 3:4, 19; Mal 1:6), usually under the umbrella of God's creative and redemptive sovereignty and his care of Israel (including his forgiveness) as well as his rule over them. However, God is depicted in the role of father much more frequently: he generates Israel's life (Mal 2:10), protects and provides for them in his mercy (Ps 68:5), grants an inheritance to them as his first-born (Jer 31:9), and

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46 This section is based on the following analysis of the use of πατήρ in the Gospels and Acts. Matthew 44/63 uses πατήρ with God as referent; Mark 3/19; Luke 14/56; Acts 3/35; John 121/136. The total number of occurrences of πατήρ varies among scholars. L. W. Hurtado, "God," DJG: 274 follows the classic study of Jeremias, Prayers, 29 and gives 109 uses. Otto Michel, "πατήρ," EDNT 3: 53, gives the same count as this study. The following breakdown of uses in the Synoptic Gospels does not note parallels: (1) "the Father" as a nominative ([ό] πατήρ): Matt 11:27 (twice); [21:31]; 24:36; Mark 13:32; Luke 9:26; 10:22 (twice); Acts 1:4, 7; 2:33; 78 times in John (e.g., 1,14, 18, 3:35; etc.); (2) "Father" as a vocative (πατέρε; [ό] πατήρ): Matt 11:25, 26; 24:36; 28:19; Mark 14:36 (with αββα); Luke 10:21 (twice); 11:2; 9 times in John; (3) "my Father" (ό πατήρ μου): Matt 11:27; 20:23; 25:34; 26:29, 39, 42, 53; Luke 2:49; 10:22; 22:29; 24:49; 25 times in John (e.g., 2:16, 5:17, 43, etc.); (4) "my heavenly Father" (ό πατήρ μου [ό] οὐρανοί): Matt 15:13; 18:35; "My Father in heaven" (ό πατήρ μου [έν] τοῖς οὐρανοῖς): Matt 7:21; 10:32, 33; 12:50; 16:17; 18:10, 14, 19; cf. John 6:32; (5) "our Father in heaven" (πατέρε ἡμῶν [έν] τοῖς οὐρανοῖς): Matt 6:9; (6) "your (plural) Father" (ό πατήρ [όμων]): Matt 6:8, 15; 10:20, 29; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:36; 12:30, 32; John 20:17; (7) "your heavenly Father" (ό πατήρ [όμων] [ό] οὐρανοί): "Your Father in heaven" (ό πατήρ [όμων] [έν] τοῖς οὐρανοῖς) Matt 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 14, 26, 32; 7:11; 23:9; (8) "your (singular) Father (who sees) in (the) secret (place)" (ό πατήρ σου [ό] βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ): Matt 6:4, 6 (twice), 18 (twice); (9) "the Father of heaven" (ό πατήρ [ό] έξ οὐρανοί): Luke 11:13. There are variants, but the most likely translation of the half-sentence is, "how much more will the Father give from heaven" (see discussion in Fitzmyer, Luke, 2:915); (10) "his [i.e., the Son of Man's] Father" (ό πατήρ αὐτοῦ): Matt 16:27; Mark 8:38; (11) "their Father" (ό πατήρ [ήμων]) Matt 13:43; (12) Johannine uses of interest: (a) "the Father who sent me": John 6:44, 8:16, 18; 12:49; 14:24; (b) "the Father God": John 6:27; (c) "one 'Father', God": 8:41; and, (d) "his own Father": John 5:18.

is the one who demands fatherly respect (Mal 1:6). In the writings from the Second Temple period, God is again either spoken about as "Father" or within a fatherly role quite frequently (Tob 13:1–5; 3 Macc. 2:21; 6:3, 28; 7:6). One particular development is God being addressed as "Father" in prayer (Sir 51:10 [Heb]; 4Q372 1:16–17; Sir 23:1, 4 [Gk]; Wis 14:3; 3 Macc. 6:8; T. Job 33:3, 9; 40:2–3; Shemoneh Esreh 5, 6 [Babylonian version; Palestinian version 4, 6]). This feature continued in the rabbinic period (e.g., m. Sota 9:15; m. Yoma 8:9; m. 'Abot 5:20; Tg. Yer. I Ex. 1:19; Tg. Yer. II Nu 21:9).

Jeremias argued that when the Synoptic Gospels refer to Jesus speaking to God—using either "Father" (in the vocative) or "my Father"—he was using simple the Aramaic word Abba (‘abba’, אבָּא), a word found on the lips of offspring (including adults) to address their fathers. This was, according to Jeremias, unique to Jesus at the time and a sure sign of an ipsissima verba Jesu that could unlock for scholars Jesus' self-awareness as God's Son. Furthermore, Jeremias argued, since Jesus is portrayed as using Abba in moments of surrender and obedience (Mark 14:36; Matt 11:25–26 par. Luke 10:21), the address is most probably connected with his mission. As part of an eschatological understanding of the Fatherhood of God, Jeremias proposed that the word Abba came to Jesus through divine revelation (e.g., Matt 11:27 par. Luke 10:22; cf. Mark 1:11 par. Matt 3:17; Luke 3:22; Mark 9:7 par. Matt 17:5; Luke 9:35), and that it testified both to the intimacy with which the disciples may approach God and to the authority from God for those who used it.

Not every point of Jeremias' argument has stood the test of time (e.g., whether Abba unlocked Jesus' self-awareness), but it remains the starting point in any discussion.

50 It is of interest to note that the Shemoneh Esreh uses this address when the most personal element of prayer is brought before God, repentance and forgiveness.
of Jesus' use of "Father" in his address of and speaking about God.\textsuperscript{54} If Neyrey and others are correct in their conclusions about the honorific nature of the title (e.g., Matt 23:9) and that the ancient world regarded benefactors as fathers, Jesus' characteristic use of πατήρ intimates respect and confidence—a confidence into which the disciples are also to enter.\textsuperscript{55} The privilege of calling God "Father" or Abba is taken up and applied elsewhere in the New Testament (e.g., Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; John 1:12, 13; cf. 1 John 3:1), but the implications of its use in the Synoptic Gospels are what needs attention here. Assuming that the address "Father" and Abba may be

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\textsuperscript{54} Thompson, \textit{The Promise of the Father}, 1–34, helpfully reviews Jeremias' contribution in light of his critics. She draws particular attention to the connection of Jesus' use of "Father" and his understanding of the nearness of the kingdom of God, a feature that the Lord's Prayer exemplifies.

\textsuperscript{55} Neyrey, \textit{Give God the Glory}, 69.
substituted, what nuances about the address "Father" are found in Matthew and Luke—the gospels where the Lord's Prayer is found?

b. "Father" (πατήρ) in Matthew and Luke

Both Matthew and Luke share Jesus' great thanksgiving (Matt 11:25–27 par. Luke 10:21–22)—one of only two prayers by Jesus recorded in the Synoptic Gospels. This prayer, which is found in two different contexts in Matthew and Luke, is of crucial importance in determining the gospel writers' and probably Jesus' own understanding of his relationship with the Father. It is not necessary to provide a detailed exegesis here, but the following points garnered from both Matthew and Luke may be noted: (1) Jesus addresses the Father as "Lord of heaven and earth," that is, Jesus' view of God reflects what is found throughout the Old Testament and Judaism: God is the sovereign master of the universe; and (2) the disciples have come to know the Father through Jesus' mediation, that is, the disciples have a derived relationship with the Father, which means that Jesus has a revelatory role. This text is therefore of foundational importance in establishing the meaning of πατήρ in prayer according to the Synoptic Gospels.

Turning to the uses of πατήρ in the Gospel of Matthew, the vast majority of the uses of πατήρ occur with the adjectival modifiers "heavenly" (οὐρανιός) or "[who is] in the heavens" (ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς). This feature has not been fully explained. Given that Luke shows no predilection for the modifier (not even taking up Mark 11:25; cf. Matt 6:14, 15), and that Matthew contains all the uses of "in the

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56 See section a. above for details.
57 That the expression "heavenly" or "in the heavens" could have been influenced by Jewish forms does not explain the many times when πατήρ is found without a modifier in Matthew. The modifier is rarely found in other traditions (only Mark 11:25; possibly Luke 11:13), and the twenty or so uses in Matthew occur mostly in material from a source apart from Mark or Q (which are let stand). For discussion, see Jeremias, Prayers, 29–54. Verses in which "in the heavens" has been added by Matthew to Q material are: Matt 5:48 (comp. Luke 6:36); Matt 6:9a (comp. Luke 11:2b); Matt 6:32 (comp. Luke 12:30); Matt 7:11 has been given a different twist in Luke 11:13 (see ch. III.B.2.c). If Matthew's sole intention in using the modifier was to do with Jewish sensibilities—either his own or those of a target audience—then the most important places (Jesus' own prayers) have, strangely, been left untouched. The situation may be the same as the substitution of "kingdom of heaven" for Mark's "kingdom of God" (e.g., compare Matt 4:17 and Mark 1:15), where, while there is no clear pattern, Matthew's Gospel has clearly developed the theme to suit its purposes. For a brief summary of the issues on the "kingdom of heaven" in Matthew see Nolland, Matthew, 175–176.
heavens," this appellation must be of significance in the theology of the Matthew, particularly with respect to prayer.⁵⁸

The majority of the uses of οὐράνιος/ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς are found in Matthean instruction contexts, especially about the future judgement of the community, with an emphasis on taking care of the "little ones" (7:21; 18:10, 14, 19, 35; esp. 25:31–45).⁵⁹ Two uses of "in the heavens" or "heavenly" with πατήρ are connected with persecution (Matt 10:32, 33), and many more with the daily life of the disciples (5:16, 44–45, 48; 6:1, 14, 26, 32; 7:11; 18:19; 23:9; note also 10:29 par. Luke 12:6). The "heavenly Father," says Jesus, cares for the creation (6:26, 30) and all its human inhabitants (5:44–45), and has intimate sovereignty over it (10:29–30). For this reason, faith in him—even in threatening times—will not be disappointed.⁶⁰ The heavenly Father is both close to the disciples as a provider (6:4, 6, 18), and also separate from them as a judge (e.g., 18:35). The modifier "heavenly"/"in the heavens" and "Father" never occurs without a possessive pronoun (either "your," "our," or "my"), the phrase "the heavenly Father" does not occur. In addition to uses of "Father" with the modifier "in the heavens" or "heavenly" there are found—only in Matthew—four references to "your Father" (6:8, 15; 10:20, 29). All are, again, in instruction sections of Matthew.

God is not only the Father of the disciples but also the Father of Jesus ("my heavenly Father," Matt 15:13; 18:35; "my Father in heaven," 7:21; 10:32, 33; 12:50; 16:17; 18:10, 19). However, Jesus' relationship with the Father is distinguished from that of the disciples, as is evident in Matthew 11:25–27 (and 16:17). The Father is the one who reveals himself fully to the Son and through the Son to others of the Son's choosing. Furthermore, those who call upon God as "Father" can do so only at Jesus' gentle invitation to become his disciples (11:28–30). In Matthew, such people are not likely to be those who are already comfortable in their knowledge of God, but those who are distressed, poor in spirit, hungry and thirsty for righteousness (5:3–

⁵⁸ There are no early references in Jewish prayers to "our father in heaven"—though there are occasional references to speaking about God in this way; Nolland, Matthew, 286.
⁵⁹ This may be a development of the uses of πατήρ without the modifier found in judgement scenes in all the Synoptic Gospels (e.g., Mark 8:38 par. Matt 16:27; Luke 9:26). Judgement scenes on the disciples conclude three (or, four) of the five teaching discourses in Matthew (7:13–27; 13:51[?]; 18:21–35; 25:31–46).
12). The expression "my Father" (11:27; 20:23; 25:34; 26:29, 39, 42, 53) is found predominantly outside instruction contexts and therefore appears to reflect a prior relationship of Jesus and the Father into which the disciples are introduced.

Luke's Gospel does not multiply the uses of "Father" like Matthew's Gospel does. In addition to references to "Father" in the vocative (Luke 10:21 [twice]; 11:2), "the Father" (9:26; 10:22 [twice]; 12:30), and "your Father" (6:36; 12:30, 32), Luke's Gospel contains four references to "my Father" (2:49; 10:22; 22:29; 24:49), of which only one is found in Matthew (10:22 par. Matt 11:27). The three remaining uses are a guide to the Lukan use of πατήρ. The first, Luke 2:49 ("I must be about my Father's business/house"), is a kind of mission statement of Jesus that looks forward to the progress of God's salvation plan in Luke-Acts.61 This does not mean that the Father–Son relationship in Luke is merely functional, but that it is, as Bovon puts it, a "personal agape."62 Luke, at the beginning of his gospel, hints at the nature of Jesus' understanding of Abba (2:40, 52). He is the God who is coming to the rescue of his people and about to do a new thing among them. This one is none other than the "Father" of Jesus!

The second guiding text on Luke's use of "my Father" is Luke 22:29. Here Jesus places the disciples in a line of royal inheritance. For their having remained with him in his trials they are granted a right to rule, just has Jesus has already been granted it by "my Father."63 Logic would dictate that Jesus' Father is—at least by virtue of the appointment—the disciples' Father as well. Luke 22:30 continues to detail the purpose of the appointment, which includes banqueting (22:15?) and sitting in positions of judgement (that is, regal authority) over Israel.

In Luke 24:49, Jesus addresses the disciples after the resurrection to commission them with their message and its meaning, concluding with "the promise of my Father" (i.e., the Holy Spirit, Acts 1:4–5) whom he is about to send upon them (Luke 1:15, 35; 2:26; 11:13; 24:47; Acts 2:33).

The Lukan version of the "Great Thanksgiving" (10:21–22—in which the final "my Father" expression is found) occurs in a different literary context than it does in Matthew's Gospel. Jesus directs the attention of the seventy[-two] disciples away from the dramatic signs of their own ministry (10:17–20) to the "Lord of heaven and

earth." Listening in on Jesus' prayer, the disciples hear him thank the "Father" for his sovereign hand in making himself known through him to them (cf. 9:18–22, 28–36). Their names are already written in heaven. Here, as elsewhere, Luke's use of the address "Father" conveys a joyful and yet purposeful tone.

c. Conclusion
In order to gain a more nuanced understanding of the address of the Lord's Prayer, a study of "Father" in the respective gospels has revealed some common features. Jesus' use of the word "Father" in Matthew and Luke is inseparable from his understanding of his identity and mission as "Son." The word "Father" (or "my Father") on his lips presumes an *already existing* relationship (Matt 11:25–27 par. Luke 10:21–22). Matthew and Luke elsewhere convey Jesus' awareness of being the "chosen one" (*οΙ ajgaphtov*; Luke 3:22 par. Matt 3:17), with whom the Father is well-pleased (*ευδοκησα*; cf. Isa 42:1). This closeness to the Father is imputed to the disciples through the revelation of himself through the Son out of his good pleasure (*ευδοκία*, Luke 10:21; Matt 11:26); such a status is intended to impel greater devotion and obedience to the Father. For the disciples, therefore, calling God "Father" in prayer is a *privilege mediated through the Son*. For the disciples in Matthew, the Father is "in the heavens," but for Jesus he is addressed without such modifiers, since his relationship with the Father is not a derived privilege, but a direct one.

To call God "Father" implies a future (and promised) privilege for the disciples. They will share with Jesus in his rule over Israel (and, presumably, the nations to which they are to go; cf. Rev 1:6; 5:10). This privilege begins in the present age with the promised Holy Spirit being poured out on the day of Pentecost from the Father (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8; 2:33, 38–39; cf. Rom 5:5; 8:14–16; Gal 4:6–7), the Spirit who is a guarantee of the inheritance to come (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14). Calling God "Father," therefore, signifies that one has *already* entered into the age to come, but awaits the fullness of that age patiently. While not stressed in the Synoptic Gospels, the promise of the Spirit to those who make requests of the Father should be noted (Luke 11:13; 10:21 par. Matt 11:25; cf. Rom 8:15–17; Gal 4:6).

In summary, the address of the Lord's Prayer intones both privilege and limitation upon privilege, confidence and restriction; but the accent is definitely upon privilege and confidence, as is clear from the prayer instructions that follow the
Lord's Prayer in Luke (i.e., Luke 11:5–13). It is also clear that this privilege of access is derived from Jesus and is not self-originating. The prior relationship of Jesus with the Father implies that Jesus and the disciples do not have an identical relationship with the Father. This difference—as will become clear in the examination of the Gethsemane prayer—is found in the purpose or goal of submitting to the Father within the plan of salvation. The greatest limitation of the privileged access disciples have been given is that the honour due to the Father must precede any request made in his name: with privilege comes responsibility. The first petition of the Lord's Prayer spells out this limitation.

4. The "You-Petitions"

a. The First Petition: "May Your Name Be Sanctified"

Matt 6:9b: ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου
Luke 11:2b: ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου

The first petition of the Lord's Prayer focuses on God's "name." The petition uses a passive form (ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου) in which the petitioner respectfully asks God to distinguish his name and to gain glory for himself (cf. John 5:41; 7:18; 8:50; 12:28, 33; 17:1, 3–5, 22, 24, 26). "One's 'name' serves as a vehicle for one's reputation, worth, and respect." Israel was warned to keep the name of the LORD sacred (Exod 20:7; Lev 22:32) and exhorted to praise that name (Ps 29:2; 66:2; 135:1), which had power to save (Ps 54:1) and to create (Ps 148:1–6). Israel knew that the LORD would always act for the sake of his Name. The first "you-petition" of the Lord's Prayer resonates with Ezekiel 36:23 in which the Lord Almighty declares that he will act out of concern for his "holy name" (cf. Ezek 36:16–21, 22)


65 Neyrey, Give God the Glory, 70.

that has been profaned among the nations.\textsuperscript{67} The Lord's future sanctification of his own name is detailed in the following verses (Ezek 36:24–38) and entails the re-establishment of his people in the land and the concomitant recognition among the nations (by whom the name of Yahweh had been profaned) that "I am Yahweh" (v. 36). Included here is the promise of a new heart and a new spirit, as well as deliverance from idolatry (vv. 24–29).

With regard to the New Testament, Wright has noted that while "sanctifying God's name" is not a prominent feature of Jesus' preaching, "it is thoroughly consistent with the sort of work that Jesus conceived himself to be undertaking."\textsuperscript{68} Jesus' temple actions (Matt 21:12–17 par. Mark 11:15–17; Luke 19:45–48; cf. John 2:13–16) and teaching (Matt 5:33–37) demonstrate that he sensed an urgency for change in light of the coming judgement and kingdom as well as a fundamental objection to the misuse of the divine Name by the Jerusalem leadership.\textsuperscript{69} The desire of Jesus continues the tradition of the prophets to ensure that God not be domesticated or constrained, but be given his due honour as a mighty King among his people in the sight of the nations.

This background lends strong support to an eschatological interpretation of the first petition, that is, that God should act decisively to remove what is impure and vindicate his name.\textsuperscript{70} This view appears to be supported by parallel prayers from the \textit{Kaddish} (along with Sir 36:1–5 and 1QM11:13–15).\textsuperscript{71} Nolland disagrees with this

\textsuperscript{67} See John Olley, "'Hallowed be Your Name'—God's Name, Ezekiel and Today," in \textit{Cultivating Wisdom with the Heart: BCV Chinese Department's 10th Anniversary Anthology of Essays} (ed. Justin Tan; Melbourne: Bible College of Victoria Chinese Department, 2006), 75–97, for a detailed account of the sanctification/profanation of the Lord's name in Ezekiel.

\textsuperscript{68} Wright, "Paradigm," 134.

\textsuperscript{69} In this light, the many occasions where God's Name is praised because of Jesus should not go unnoticed (esp. in Luke, see, e.g., 1:42, 46–55; 2:14, 29–32, 38, 49; 5:26; 7:16; 9:43; 13:17), nor should his own public acknowledgement of the Name of the Father in Luke 10:21–22 (par. Matt 11:25–27).


\textsuperscript{71} Meier, \textit{A Marginal Jew}, 2:295–296. The first two petitions of the \textit{Kaddish} run as follows:

Glorified and sanctified be God's great name
throughout the world which he has created according to his will.
May he establish his kingdom in your lifetime and during your days
eschatological slant, arguing that the *Kaddish* prayer is ethically motivated: it calls people to glorify God in praise by *actions*.\(^{72}\) He offers Isaiah 29:23 and 1 Enoch 61:12 in support, both of which speak of God's name being sanctified (i.e., praised by people) *after* the last judgement in the new age.\(^{73}\) Nolland's interpretation is to be distinguished from that favoured among the scholars of The Jesus Seminar who translate the first petition, "Father, your name be revered."\(^{74}\)

The weight of opinion is evenly divided between the two main options—eschatological and non-eschatological. Neither view can fully rely on the *Kaddish*, the eschatology of which is not as immediate as some would like ("in your lifetime and during your days"). Although either view is possible syntactically, both views are probably necessary for a faithful interpretation of this petition.\(^{75}\) The first petition of the Lord's Prayer is probably best seen as the presupposition of all the other petitions, that is, that God's name be set apart or glorified.\(^{76}\) Whether this is

and within the lifetime of the entire House of Israel, speedily and soon.


\(^{72}\) Nolland, *Matthew*, 286.

\(^{73}\) The specific contexts of Sirach 36:1–5 and 1QM11:13–15 are apocalyptic end-time battles against the hordes of the godless (including a reference to Gog, cf. Ezek 38–39). The defeat of the desecrating armies of the nations is not a prominent feature of Jesus' preaching of the kingdom, which leans toward salvation rather than judgement when compared to his contemporaries. See Theissen and Merz, *Historical Jesus*, 264–265.

\(^{74}\) Funk, Hoover, and Seminar, *The Five Gospels*, 149. They argue that Jesus' view of the kingdom was "more subtle, less bombastic and threatening" than that of John the Baptist or the early Christian community, who are locked into apocalyptic imagery. For example, Funk, Hoover, and Seminar, *The Five Gospels*, 137: "Jesus conceived of God's rule as all around him but difficult to discern. God was so real for him that he could not distinguish God's present activity from any future activity. He had a poetic sense of time in which the future and the present merged." It is of interest to note that scholars who read the "you-petitions" non-eschatologically also interpret the first petition in the light of the second.

\(^{75}\) Betz, *Sermon*, 389: "Since prayer language tends to be general, one need not decide on only one of the possibilities of interpretation."

\(^{76}\) Contra Norman Metzler, "The Lord's Prayer: Second Thoughts on the First Petition," in *Authenticating the Words of Jesus* (NTTS; ed. Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 187–202. who proposes that the first petition is a "doxological honorific qualifier" of the address. Catchpole, *Jesus People*, 134–135, agrees with Metzler. This view places the second petition in first place and therefore
requested in a future or final way or in the here and now by individuals and communities, God's glory remains the ultimate condition of all prayer. Moreover, the connection of Jesus' own name with that of the Father means that his name must also be honoured (esp. Matthew, see, e.g., 1:21, 23; 2:2, etc.; 7:21–23; 18:19–20; 25:40, 45; 26:62–68, 70, 72, 74; 27:11, etc.; 28:19)—those who honour Jesus and his disciples honour the Father (10:32–33). For these reasons the first petition does have a theological priority over all subsequent petitions.

b. The Second Petition: "May Your Kingdom Come"

Matt 6:10a: εἰλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου
Luke 11:2c: εἰλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου

The petition for the kingdom to come combines elements of Jewish (apocalyptic) eschatology ("[the] day[s] is/are coming," e.g., Amos 8:11) and the primary element/symbol of Jesus' preaching: the kingdom of God/heaven. Although the kingdom of God is not a prominent phrase in either the Old Testament or the literature of late Second Temple Judaism, the concept of God reigning in judgement and salvation is foundational to Jewish eschatology. This literature broadly presents two aspects: (1) a deep confidence in God's sovereign care of his elect people Israel, no matter what the appearances (e.g., Isa 40:9–11; 52:7); and, (2) the unshakeable expectation of God's complete restoration of his (persecuted) people Israel worshipping him in their promised land with all spiritual and mortal enemies punished after a final struggle of cosmic proportions (e.g., 1QM XI–XII). The
sayings about the kingdom in the Synoptic Gospels reflect, to varying degrees, the wide spectrum of sayings found in this "context of expectation," but the categorisation is not straightforward. At the simplest level the Synoptic sayings are distinguished by two foci: the kingdom as already present or "here" in the preaching and ministry of Jesus (e.g., Matt 12:28 par. Luke 11:20; Luke 10:9, 11; 17:21; cf. Matt 11:12 par. Luke 16:16), and the kingdom as yet to come (e.g., Mark 9:1; 14:25 par. Matt 26:29; cf. Luke 22:18). The two viewpoints are not easily separated, but the latter appears to take the leading edge in Jesus' proclamation. At the inauguration of his ministry, for example, Jesus repeats the preaching of John the Baptist, by announcing that the kingdom of God had drawn near (i.e., was upon the listeners), but had not yet arrived (Mark 1:15 par. Matt 4:17; 3:2). The spatial references about the kingdom—that it is something that "comes" or which one "enters into"—reinforce the primacy of the "not yet" aspect (e.g., Mark 9:47; 10:14, 15, 23–25; 14:25 and pars.). Indeed, the use of the verb "to come" with βασιλεία in the second petition is unusual in the Synoptic Gospels and probably reflects the prophetic expressions about the "coming" of the LORD (e.g., 1 Chron 4:33; Pss 96:13; 98:9; Isa 26:21; Mic 1:3) or the coming of the "the day of the LORD" (Isa 13:6; Joel 2:1; Zech 14:1; Mal 4:5). If God were to come finally and fully, then his rule would be dynamically and finally present in both judgement and salvation.

Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 41–130. Pitre's view (143)—that the kingdom "comes" when the scattered exiles return home to a restored kingdom—confuses the Davidic kingdom, of which the OT speaks, with the divine reign of which Jesus speaks. The return of the twelve tribes is an effect of God's final reign, but not the reign itself. Dunn, Jesus Remembered, 1:396. The extent to which a single "story" can be told to encompass the diversity is debated. Meta-narrative schema have been championed by a number of scholars, particularly, Wright, Victory, 124–653; N. T. Wright, The New Testament and the People of God (COQG 1; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992). Others are more cautious, Dunn, Jesus Remembered, 1:396–398, 470–477.


Dunn, Jesus Remembered, 437–439.

Mark 1:15 carefully expresses the "already–not yet" eschatological tension embedded in Jesus' kingdom of God sayings: the "time" (καιρός, or "era") has been fulfilled, but the kingdom of God "has [only] drawn hear." The kingdom is not said to have come outside of the exorcising ministry of Jesus, and here a verb other than ἔρχεσθαι is found (φθένειν, Matt 12:28 par. Luke 11:20).

Nolland, Luke, 2:614: "Our petition here seems to reformulate in kingdom language the OT anticipation of the coming of God in judgement and salvation. The
universal phenomenon and not limited to the circumstances of one person or a community as seen in Jesus' ministry. Other uses of "the kingdom of God/heaven" with the verb "to come" in the Synoptic Gospels confirm this (Matt 12:28; Luke 17:20–21; 23:42). The second petition of the Lord's Prayer belongs in the future group of kingdom sayings, as the vast majority of scholars agree.

In other places, however, the kingdom has crossed the threshold (Luke 10:9, 11) and is present in the midst of Jesus doing his work (Matt 12:27 par. Luke 11:20; Matt 11:12 par. Luke 16:16). There is something "new" in Jesus' ministry (Mark 2:21–22 par. Matt 9:16–17; Luke 7:3–38; cf. Mark 1:27 and pars.), a new era—distinct from the prophets who came before him—in which grace will be found (Matt 11:2–19 par. Luke 7:18–35; 16:16). This "already—not yet" tension is also reflected in the Son of Man sayings, with their future (Mark 8:38–9:1; 14:62 and pars.) and present (e.g., Mark 2:10, 28) aspects.

OT also looks forward to a time when God would in some greater sense become king (Isa 24:23; 33:22; 52:7; Zeph 3:15; 14:9)." Luke 17:20–21 is perhaps the most difficult of these sayings to fit into this schema; it is probably emphasizing an "opportunity to be seized while there is still time"; so Wright, Victory, 469. See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1160–1162, for discussion on the difficult ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ ὑμῶν ("among you"). This saying is connected with teaching that emphasizes the sudden arrival of the kingdom (17:22–37) that should not lead to fear but to expectant, confident—yet persistent—prayer to God for justice to be done at that time (18:1–7). The whole unit (17:20–18:8) points to the now/not-yet-but-soon character of the kingdom announcements as well as the inseparability of the future coming kingdom from the coming of Jesus and/or the Son of Man (cf. Matt 16:28; 18:8; 23:42).

87 Luke 17:20–21 is perhaps the most difficult of these sayings to fit into this schema; it is probably emphasizing an "opportunity to be seized while there is still time"; so Wright, Victory, 469. See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1160–1162, for discussion on the difficult ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ ὑμῶν ("among you"). This saying is connected with teaching that emphasizes the sudden arrival of the kingdom (17:22–37) that should not lead to fear but to expectant, confident—yet persistent—prayer to God for justice to be done at that time (18:1–7). The whole unit (17:20–18:8) points to the now/not-yet-but-soon character of the kingdom announcements as well as the inseparability of the future coming kingdom from the coming of Jesus and/or the Son of Man (cf. Matt 16:28; 18:8; 23:42).

88 For example, Duling, "Kingdom," 57; Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 1:409–412; Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 2:291–302. Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 2:299, summarises this view well: "In short, when Jesus prays that God's kingdom come, he is simply expressing in a more abstract phrase the eschatological hope of the latter part of the OT and the Pseudepigrapha that God would come on the last day to save and restore his people Israel." Referring to the *Kaddish* and the eleventh petition of the *Shemoneh Esreh* Meier concludes: "If Jesus and his contemporaries knew and prayed this eschatological prayer, it is difficult to see how Jesus' own prayer, 'Your kingdom come,' would be understood differently (i.e., non-eschatologically) by his disciples (300); cf. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 1:409–412. Against this, Betz, *Sermon*, 391–392, shows how there was sufficient variety within the versions of the Jewish prayers to accommodate both future and realised eschatology.

89 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 455–461.

90 Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 439–455; "[I]t would hardly distort the evidence to sum up the emphasis in terms of the kingdom being already active in and through Jesus' mission, in contrast to that of the Baptist" (455).
Of particular interest here is the fact that the nearness of the kingdom is not only evident and experienced by others through Jesus' ministry, but is also sensed by Jesus himself. Jesus speaks of the arrival of the judgement of God as something that hangs over him (Luke 12:49–50; see also Mark 10:38–45 par. Matt 20:22–28; Luke 9:57–62). There is an urgency to Jesus' pronouncements about the kingdom: it is coming soon, within a generation (Mark 9:1; 13:30), and the disciples must be ready (e.g., Matt 24:36–25:30). The second petition may have a self-referential meaning for Jesus; he must be "baptised" and "drink the cup" (Luke 12:50; cf. Mark 10:38–39 par. Matt 20:21–22; Mark 14:36 par. Matt 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42). When prayed by the disciples, this petition implies that they too will suffer at the climax of the kingdom's appearance (see ch. IV below).

In sum, the second petition is eschatologically-oriented, but not exclusively so. The point is often made by scholars that a future-only outlook does not fit the social context or time frame of Jesus' hearers. Certainly, the writer of Luke-Acts considered that the powerful presence of Jesus continued—by his Spirit—into the age of the church (Luke 4:16–19; 7:18–23; 9:1, 2; 10:9–11, 17–20, 21–24; 14:12–24; Acts 3:16; 19:13; cf. John 14:13–14; 2 Cor 13:12; Isa 29:18–19; 4Q521:2 II.5–8). To consider the second petition only from an eschatological position that overrides the here-and-now requests of the "we-petitions" does not reflect the holistic nature of Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom nor, it will be seen, does it allow room for the inner connections of Jesus' prayer teaching and example to be appreciated. The "we-petitions" may best be considered as actualisations of the petition for the kingdom in the here and now to the extent to which it is available. Matthew 6:33—which promises the alleviation of present needs if one prioritises the kingdom of God—provides a good illustration of how the supposedly opposing petitions of the Lord's Prayer may fit together.

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91 Neyrey, *Give God the Glory*, 72–73.
93 Betz, *Sermon*, 396, sees a rhetorical flow of the text from the last line of the third petition—which focuses on God's will being carried out "on earth"—to the following "we-petitions" which focus on human needs in that space. Perhaps the second and third petitions should both be seen as preparing the way for the "we-petitions" that focus on the "self" needs of the petitioner.
c. The Third Petition: "May Your Will Be Done, on Earth As It Is in Heaven"\textsuperscript{94}

Matt 6:10b: \[\gamma\varepsilon\nu\theta\eta\tau\omega\tau\iota\iota\omicron\nu\tau\iota\omicron\iota\mu\nu\sigma\sigma\omicron\upsilon,\]
\[\dot{\omega}\varsigma\varepsilon\nu\omicron\upsilon\omicron\ra\nu\nu\nu\varsigma\kappa\alpha\upsilon\varepsilon\pi\iota\upsilon\gamma\eta\varsigma\]

The third petition of the Lord's Prayer is frequently cited by those who want to give the prayer an eschatological-only meaning—how can God's will be "done" unless his salvific purpose and rule is finally accomplished?\textsuperscript{96} Yet the moral or behavioural "will of God" that humans perform cannot easily be excluded from this petition, particularly given Matthew's emphasis on this theme (Matt 7:21; 12:50; 18:14; 21:31). The third petition of the Lord's Prayer is of great significance to this study as a whole because it is one of a number of places in the New Testament where the "will of God" is specifically set forth as a potential limit upon petitionary prayer (cf. Mark 14:36 par. Matt 26:39, 42; Luke 22:41; 1 John 5:14, 15).\textsuperscript{97} Given the significance of this petition for the thesis question, more detailed attention will be given to it, beginning with the qualifying clause "on earth as it is in heaven."


\textsuperscript{95} The alternative reading, "][Your will be done] in heaven and on earth," has neither manuscript nor contextual support. The matter is well discussed by Lohfink, "Heilsplan," 114. The petition does echo the address in the Matthean Lord's Prayer and may form a bracket around the "you-petitions." One would have expected the bracket to be on the first petition not the address. Furthermore, the plural οὐρανοῖ, found in the address, refers to the region above "heaven" (οὐρανῶς), the singular form found in the petition.

\textsuperscript{96} For example, Davies and Allison, \textit{Matthew}, 1:605.

\textsuperscript{97} The third petition does not occur in the Lukan version of the Lord's Prayer. It is not easy to determine whether the third petition existed in the prayer before Matthew's incorporation of it into the gospel or if it comes from his own hand. Matthew has a number of verses not found in Mark or Luke that carry the same terminology as this petition (Matt 7:22; 12:50 par. Mark 3:35, cf. Luke 11:28; Matt 18:14; 21:31; 26:42). The first half of the petition is found on Jesus' lips in the Garden of Gethsemane scene with the exact wording (Matt 26:42). This is an additional petition to the Markan version, which Matthew otherwise follows very closely. While many consider the petition to have been added by the author from this episode—or in accordance with his own theological agenda, e.g., Hartman, "Your Will Be Done," 214—a case can still be made for its originality to the prayer; so Betz, \textit{Sermon}, 393; Cullmann, \textit{Prayer}, 47–48; Lohfink, "Heilsplan," 131–132.
The cosmology behind the qualifying clause (ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς) points—both in Jewish and Hellenistic thought—to a region above the earth that the heavenly bodies inhabit, generally considered to be under (the) god's/gods' control, either directly or through heavenly powers. The qualification "on earth as it is in heaven" directs petitioners to the thought that God's will should be done in the realm of human beings (where it is resisted) as it is already done in the realms outside the control of humans (but now in the control of God). The emphasis of the second clause of the petition is not upon its timing, but its scope (i.e., the realms in which God's will is to be done), and so it reinforces the previous petition for the kingdom of God to come (in fullness). The petition seeks an expansion of God's sovereign rule so that all creation might be as God would want it. But what is the "will of God" in this petition?

In the Septuagint, θέλημα usually translates the Hebrew word for "desire" (דר), both with respect to God and to human beings. θέλημα frequently refers to God's will done by humans, including references to his revealed will in the Torah. There are some references in the Septuagint to God doing his will, either in creation or in the lives of human beings (1 Macc 3:60; Sir 43:16; Isa 44:28; 48:14; Dan [θ] 4:35). This emphasis on God achieving his own will continues in the Second Temple literature (and beyond, e.g., m. Abot 2:4; b. Ber. 29b; b. Meg. 27b; b. Yoma 53b),

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99 "Heaven" and "earth" functions as a merismus, expressing the totality of all creation.
100 Correctly, Betz, Sermon, 395; Hartman, "Your Will Be Done," 216: "To pray that God's will be done on earth means [...] to recognise that there is a resistance against God's will. [...] So the prayer looks forward to a situation in which God's all comprising will holds sway without any resistance, viz. his salvific, creative, and moral will. That is to say that the petition comes close to the preceding one, 'your kingdom come.'" He says elsewhere that the first three petitions deal with such an immense topic that they are expressed in "cautious circumlocutions" (217).
102 It includes neutral human desires for earthly goods as well as wrong desires (e.g., 2 Kgdms 2:23; 3 Kgdms 5:22, 23, 24; 9:11; 2 Chron 9:12; Esth 1:8; 1 Macc 3:60; Pss 106:30; 110:2; 144:19; Sir 32:17; Isa 58:13; Jer 23:17, 26; Dan 8:4; 11:3, 36), as well as good desires (e.g., Pss 1:2; 15:3; Eccl 12:10), including God's divine favour (Ps 29:6; Isa 62:4; Jer 9:23) or displeasure (Eccl 5:3; Mal 1:10).
103 1 Esd 8:16; 9:9; 2 Macc 1:3; 4 Macc 18:16; Pss 39:9; 102:7, 21; 142:10; Pss Sol 7:3; Isa 58:3; cf. Odes Sol. 14:3
perhaps echoing ideas found in Hellenistic texts. The New Testament continues this broad understanding of God's will, though emphasis is put on a plan of salvation that is being revealed. Lohfink, for example, observes parallels between the third petition of the Lord's Prayer, Acts 22:14–15, and Ephesians 1:3–14 (where the will of God spoken of is one that has been made known by revelation to the apostle Paul but had existed eternally with God). He argues that this concept—also found in the "Pauline school"—echoes that found in the Lord's Prayer, the Gethsemane incident (Matt 26:42), and Jesus' instructions that the "little ones" not fall (18:14, "the will of your Father in heaven"). Moreover, the παντά ("all things") given by the Father to Jesus as Son in Matthew 11:27 includes not only sovereign

104 Betz, Sermon, 392–396. Lohfink, "Heilsplan," 112–113, also noted that pre-Christian Jewish literature as a whole generally uses "will of God" to refer to the moral will of God which humans are to keep. He says the one exception is a prayer by Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, which begins "you [God] do your will in heaven," but this lacks mention of the comparison between heaven and earth which distinguishes the third petition (117–118). Heinemann's view that the third petition fits well within a rabbinic prayer formula is found wanting as well. Lohfink, "Heilsplan," 115–117, refers to J. Heinemann, Prayer in the Talmud (Berlin/NewYork: 1977).


106 Lohfink, "Heilsplan," 110–133. See also the summary and discussion of Lohfink by Cullmann, Prayer, 48–50. Betz, Sermon, 393–394, also discusses the idea of a "plan" in Jewish prayers, though without reference to Lohfink.


power to act, but also "perfect insight into the salvation plan of God," according to Lohfink.  

He finds a parallel for this view in early Jewish Wisdom theology (e.g., Wis 9:13–18) and apocalyptic (Apoc. Ab. 21:1–29:21; esp. 22:2).  

"God's will" is a salvation plan that is hidden with God and hence fixed, yet is in the process of being realised.  

Cullmann modifies Lohfink's view by saying that the cosmic and the individual aspects should not be separated (e.g., Matt 10:30 par. Luke 12:7).  

The salvation plan that unfurls is not remote or "big picture" but even includes sparrows. This integration of the cosmic and individual will of God is surely part of the conclusion Jesus came to in the Garden of Gethsemane (cf. Heb 5:7–8; 1 Peter 2:23), perhaps reflecting his own "seeking" of God's kingdom (Matt 6:33). This can be taken further still when it is noticed that the address Jesus uses in his Gethsemane prayer ("my Father," 26:39, 42) is heard repeatedly in the phrase the "will of my Father in heaven" (Matt 7:21; 12:50; 18:14; 21:31). This suggests that Jesus' obedience to the Father's will in Gethsemane is integrally related to the obedience of the disciples to his Father. If they would be "sons of your Father who is in heaven" (5:45), then complete obedience to the Father's will is required (5:48). As the exegesis of the Gethsemane prayer will show, the disciples are linked to Jesus in his obedience to the Father and are called to pray his prayer after him.  

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110 Lohfink, "Heilsplan," 125. Lohfink may have overextended conclusions from the evidence, for the "wisdom" of God is firmly connected to the moral will in Wis 9 rather than the creative or salvific will. Note the preceding context:  

9 With you is wisdom, she who knows your works and was present when you made the world; she understands what is pleasing in your sight and what is right according to your commandments.  

10 Send her forth from the holy heavens, and from the throne of your glory send her, that she may labor at my side, and that I may learn what is pleasing to you.  

11 For she knows and understands all things, and she will guide me wisely in my actions and guard me with her glory. (NRSV, emphasis added)  
112 Lohfink, "Heilsplan," 132.  
113 Cullmann, Prayer, 49–50.  
114 Lohfink, "Heilsplan," 133.  
The third petition, then, requests not only that humans obey God as he is obeyed in the heavenly realm, but also that his plan of salvation be realised through obedience and even suffering. However, there are two other aspects to this petition to which attention should be drawn. The first is that whenever contemporary Jewish and other New Testament literature speaks about God’s will being "done," ποιεῖν is used and not γίνεσθαι, which is used in the Lord’s Prayer and Jesus’ Gethsemane prayer. The use of the "divine" passive γεννηθήτω is therefore worth a little more attention. The same imperative verb (γενηθήτω) form is found nine times in Matthew (Matt 6:10; 8:13; 9:29; 11:23; 15:28; 21:42; 26:42; 28:4). Apart from the target references (Matt 6:10; 26:42) and those in common with Luke and/or Mark (Matt 11:23; 21:42), three out of the remaining four Matthean occurrences of γεννηθήτω are part of Jesus’ pronouncements of healing or exorcisms (Matt 8:13; 9:29; 15:28). Closer attention to these references reveals: (1) that the healing pronouncement follows either a profession or demonstration of faith in God or toward Jesus; (2) that Gentiles are beneficiaries of the power of Jesus; and, (3) that Jesus is called upon to do these works as the "son of David" (Matt 9:27; 15:22), a

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116 This is true both in the LXX (for human action [e.g. 3 Kgdms 5:22, 23, 24; Ps 102:21] and divinely caused action [1 Macc 3:60, 23:50; Isa 44:28]) and the NT (for human action only [Matt 12:50]). Note also John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38, 39, 40 where ποιεῖν and θέλημα are used by Jesus to refer to his desire to do what his Father has sent him to do, which will includes the drawing of people to God. The Christological aspects to this are treated in the chapter on John. The nearest parallel to the present verse is 1 Macc 3:60, ὡς δ’ ἄν ἂν θέλημα ἐν οὐρανῷ ὁτως ποιήσει, "But as his will in heaven may be, so shall he do" (NRSV).

Under the entry for γίνομαι in BDAG two (out of 10) definitions are relevant. The meaning preferred by the lexicon's editors for Matt 6:10 (26:42) is listed under meaning 2: "[t]o come into existence, be made, be created, be manufactured, be performed," with special reference to "commands, instructions be fulfilled, performed" (emphasis original). Biblical prayer references listed are: Matt 6:10; 26:42; Luke 11:2; 22:42. Non-prayer citations are Luke 14:22 and 23:24, both using the word "request" (αἰτημα; cf. Phil 4:6). Non-biblical citations for this meaning include Appianus, Liby. 90 (1st/2nd c. A.D.); Syntipas (10th/11th c. A.D.). Another possible meaning in BDAG is the more general "to occur as a process or result, happen, turn out, take place" (emphasis original).

117 By way of comparison, Luke's Gospel, which has 128 uses of γίνεσθαι contains only three uses of the passive form, two of which are from other Synoptic sources. Acts contains 118 uses of the γίνομαι and uses the passive five times.

118 Matt 8:13 concludes 8:5–13, the healing of the centurion's servant, a story shared with Luke 7:1–10 (both have additions that reflect their gospel's direction) and possibly John 4:46–54 (though this may be a separate story). The verse is additional to Luke. Matt 9:29 is the pronouncement of healing in 9:27–31—found only in
prominent Matthean theme. It is probable that Matthew's use of γενηθητω is in some way related to his overall gospel purposes of Jesus bringing God's new realm into existence through his healing and exorcising ministry. When gospel readers hear or say "your will be done" (γενηθητω), therefore, it refers not only to God's salvation plan (11:25–27) and God's moral will (Matt 7:21; 12:50; 18:14; 21:31), but also to God's willingness to bring about his kingdom benefits in the here and now.

A second aspect worth reflecting upon is whether the emphasis in Matthew on keeping Jesus' commands should be included in the will of God referred to in the third petition. In the climax of Matthew's Gospel, the disciples are commanded by the risen Jesus—who has been given "all authority in heaven and on earth"—to "make disciples of all nations [...] teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you" (Matt 28:18–20; NRSV, emphasis added). The strictness with which Jesus speaks about fulfilling the Torah and the Prophets (5:17–20; 7:12)—as found predominantly in the "discourses" of Matthew (chs. 5–7, 10, 18, 24–25)—is probably intended to be maintained for his own teachings (7:21–23). At the very least readers will begin to understand the will of God through Jesus' instructions. To the keeping of these instructions is attached the blessing of Jesus' presence (28:20; 18:20; 1:23; 25:31–45).

To sum up, the third petition of the Lord's Prayer—found only in Matthew's version—requests that God's will, both in its broad and narrow perspectives, be performed in all creation. The will of God refers in the first place to the unfolding (eschatological) salvation plan of God, which has been disclosed in Jesus' powerful ministry (Matt 3:17; 17:5; 11:25–27) and will be disclosed in the ongoing ministry of the disciples (10:5–42). This is the will of God to which the disciples and others respond (11:25–27). Yet God's will is not merely "big picture," but entails the call to obey the Father in ways that reflect his character (5:48) and bring about his purposes, even through suffering and death, as the Gethsemane petition reminds readers (26:39, 42). Hence individual obedience and the salvation plan of God intersect. Disciples who pray the third petition do so in order to see the fulfilment of God's salvation plan
in the present, both in joyful success and in trials, while they long for its consummation when heaven and earth will be in complete harmony. The tension between promise and restriction is felt even in the petition that is considered by many to be the most limiting one.

d. Conclusion to the "You-Petitions"
Following the promising invitation to follow Jesus' example to petition God as "Father," the sanctifying of God's name is placed as the ultimate goal of all prayer—a goal that acts as both guide and condition. The second petition ("may your kingdom come") is inseparable from the context of Jesus' teaching and healing–exorcising ministry in which the kingdom of God is portrayed as future and yet is dynamically present. (This dynamism creates expectation of change and will be shown to provide theological buttress to the prayer promises in the next chapter.) The paralleling of Jesus' ministry in the ministry of the apostles (and people's petitions) in the book of Acts supports this expectation of the here-and-now impact of God's power. Nevertheless, any enthusiasm for God to perform wondrous deeds must be tempered by the fact that Jesus himself ultimately submits to God's kingdom—a time of judgement that he sensed was upon him. In this way, the second petition of the Lord's Prayer acts as a present condition upon petition (like Jesus' Gethsemane prayer; see, ch. IV, below) as well as a prayer for here-and-now change.

The third petition ("may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven")—found only in Matthew—is at first glance a more obvious limitation to petition. Yet the investigation into what defined the will of God in the Synoptic Gospels showed it be an idea that encompasses God's moral commands and his salvific purposes, but not in such a way that they may be easily distinguished from each other. The third petition declares complete dependence upon the divine hand, but not in a quietistic way. The imperative verb of the petition (γένηθη) was found in a number of Matthew's healing/exorcism stories and nuances God's will in that gospel to include God's restorative or renewing power revealed in Jesus. On the other hand, the repetition of the third petition in the Matthean Gethsemane story means that God's will requires the petitioner to entrust him- or herself to the salvation plan of God in the midst of suffering. Such submission is not seen as a limitation on petition, but rather the completion of calling upon God as Father or Abba. It should also be remembered when considering the third petition that although Luke's Gospel does not contain this
petition, there is a very firm place in that gospel for the bringing about of God's salvation plan through prayer.\textsuperscript{119}

The investigation of the first three petitions, both individually and as a unit, has uncovered foundations in the relationship between promises and limitations in petitionary prayer. On the one hand, they remind petitioners that the Father is "in heaven," that is, that he is worthy of all praise because of his supremacy over all creatures and events. On the other hand, they direct petitioners to the fact that purposes of the Father are not remote from them but intimately involved in their daily lives—even in their suffering—as the kingdom is being brought to fulfilment.

The Father's name, kingdom, and will not only supply the limit of prayer (including moral limits) but also its source and power. The dominant eschatological view of the first three petitions tended to flatten out this tension or at least to leave it imbalanced. To prioritize the "you petitions" over the "we petitions" overlooks the embedded nature of the tension that encompasses petitionary prayer.

5. The "We-Petitions"

a. The Fourth Petition: "Give Us Today Our Daily Bread"

Matt 6:11:
\begin{quote}
τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον·
\end{quote}

Luke 11:3:
\begin{quote}
τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ’ ἡμέραν.\textsuperscript{121}
\end{quote}

The fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer is important for this study as it appears to dominically approve petitions for the daily necessities of life. Frequently this petition is spiritualised or given an eschatological meaning by scholars, but it will be argued

\textsuperscript{119} See section A above ch. III.B below for further comments.

\textsuperscript{120} The present imperative δίδου ("give") rather than Matthew's aorist δὸς, may stress regularity in prayer. See next note.

\textsuperscript{121} While both Matthew and Mark agree on the object of the fourth petition (τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον), Luke's version of the request differs from Matthew's in two ways. Firstly, where Matthew has σήμερον ("today") Luke has τὸ καθ’ ἡμέραν ("each day"/"daily"/"day-by-day"), which is a distributive expression; cf. BDAG, κατά, 2c, p. 512. Τὸ καθ’ ἡμέραν is found only in Luke 11:3; 19:47, but is indistinguishable from καθ’ ἡμέραν found in Luke 9:23; 16:19; 22:53 par. Matt 26:55; Mark 14:49; Acts 2:46; 3:2; 16:5; 17:11; 19:9; 1 Cor 15:31; Heb 3:8; 13; 7:27; 10:11. Through this phrase Luke-Acts stresses the intensity and regularity of the early Christian gatherings including their evangelistic success (Acts 2:46; 16:5; 17:11; 19:9) and their praying (Acts 2:46). The second difference is its use of the present imperative (δίδου) rather than the aorist (δὸς), on which see n. 41 above.
here that it is intended to be an encouragement to press upon God even the most menial supplications.

The fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer breaks the pattern of the preceding and following petitions by placing its object ("our epiousion bread," τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον) at the start of the petition in the emphatic position. This takes place in both its versions and has the effect—in Greek—of drawing attention to its peculiarity. Scholarly discussion of the phrase has tended to focus on the modifier ἐπιούσιον (epiousion), but the noun ἄρτος ("bread") should not be ignored. ἄρτος usually refers either to a loaf of bread (e.g., Matt 4:3; 7:9; 14:17, 19; 15:34, 36, 26:26) or to food generally (e.g., Matt 15:2). One specific use of ἄρτος includes "the loaf" of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor 10:16; cf. 11:23, 34; Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7–11). Metaphorical uses of ἄρτος occur in Jesus' teaching to the disciples about the "leaven" of the Pharisees (note the development in Matt 16:5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12), in John 6:35, 48, 51 (the "bread of life"), and in parables about feasting in the future kingdom of God (e.g., Luke 14:15, 16–24).

There is, thirdly, a well-recognised pattern of Jesus' commensality that can be linked to the wider regions of this petition. Such a broad canvas for the word ἄρτος leaves the fourth petition open to becoming a cipher for every Christian's need and aspiration so it is probably best to begin by limiting the word ἄρτος in the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer to refer to "food" that is eaten.

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122 Johannes Behm, "ἄρτος," TDNT 1: 477–478. Betz, Sermon, 377, says that "bread" is a "synechdoche"; Luz, Matthew 1-7, 383, says "it can stand as pars pro toto for 'nourishment' as such." See also BDAG, 136, ἄρτος.

123 Some caution is needed by interpreters at this point, since "eating and drinking" are not always considered positively in Jesus' teaching (e.g., Matt 24:49; Luke 12:19).


125 So also BDAG, 136. Betz, Sermon, 397, focuses attention on possessive pronoun ἡμῶν ("our bread"), which is strictly unnecessary. He finds in this possessive an "agrarian theology" in which the "bread" sought is that which we make from the grain God provides. "The petition has therefore in mind not only us as consumers but also as producers and distributors." This can also be found in the ninth petition of the Shemoneh Esreh: "Bless this year for us, Lord our God, and cause all its produce to prosper; and bless the land; and satisfy us with goodness; and bless our year as the good years. Blessed art thou, Lord, who blessest the years"; version from, Emil Schürer et al., The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D 135) (4 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1973–1986), 2:457.
No solid evidence has been found outside the Lord’s Prayer for the meaning of the adjective ἐπιούσιος. A sound definition should take account not only of the literary context and etymological background, but also of the social context of Jesus’ ministry. The literary context of the prayer is Jesus’ teaching in the Matthean context (i.e., the Sermon on the Mount) that includes exhortations to depend completely upon a heavenly Father who knows all the petitioner’s needs (Matt 6:8), and who houses, feeds, and clothes all his creatures (Matt 6:25–34). Within the contemporary social context, it is strongly argued that the gospel audiences were predominantly hired workers (e.g., Matt 20:1–16; Jas 2:15, 16 and 4:4) and subsistence farmers whose livelihoods were determined either at the beginning of the day or at the end of a season. Among the many suggestions, the more probable meanings of ἐπιούσιος include: (1) "for today"; (2) "daily"; (3) "pertaining to the coming emphasis original. Betz’ view may be overloading the petition's meaning, but is a fascinating insight worth pursuing elsewhere.

126 Origen, On Prayer 27.7ff., notes its novelty. See Fitzmyer, Luke, 2:904, for comments on its alleged appearance in a now lost fifth century papyrus.


128 A major new contribution to the meaning of ἐπιούσιος has been offered by Georg Korting, Das Vaterunser und die Unheilabwehr: Ein Beitrag zur ἐπιούσιον-Debatte (Mt 6, 11/Lk 11, 3) (NTAbh 48; Münster: Aschendorff, 2004). His essential argument is that: (1) there is no agreement on the origin of or basis for the word ἐπιούσιος; (2) the word ἐπιούσιος was incorrectly transcribed in all MSS and should instead be ἐπὶ ρόσιον—"Das Omikron […] ist gleichsam ein Rho ohne Häkchen und das Rho […] ein Omikron mit Häkchen. Indem ein Omikron mit einem Rho verwechselt wurde, konnte der Text fehlerhaft überliefert werden" (200); (3) this petition should be understood in a spiritual and not a material sense as bread received in the eucharist: "Gib uns heute (täglich[, Luke]) unser Brot als Mittel zur Sühne/als Zeichen des Dankes für die Befreiung usw" (201, emphasis original), where "Sühne" refers to the sin-offering; (4) the theoretical bases for the argument include the employment of the word ρόσιον in the LXX and the early Christian use of bread in the eucharist leading to a transferred sense; (5) the history of use of ρόσιον is detailed to show its availability and suitability for use in the period (347–754). Kortig’s thesis should not be accepted because: (1) it replaces one unknown by another; (2) it overlooks the repetition of the ρο- stem in the "we-petitions." The Lord’s Prayer displays economy and variety in its vocabulary. (3) It assumes a non-originality of the Lord's Prayer in this petition (although see qualification on p. 199); and, most importantly, (4) it shows no textual evidence for this conjecture.

129 Substantivizing of ἐπὶ τὴν οὐσίαν [ἡμέραν]; it follows John Chrysostom who noted its consistency with Matt 6:34. It also chimes in well with the manna episodes (Exod 16:4 LXX). See Fitzmyer, Luke, 2:905, note (b); BDAG, 376–377, ἐπιούσιος
day” (i.e., the day that has dawned); (4) "for the following day" or "tomorrow" (i.e., the day that is yet to begin); (5) "for the future"; (6) "necessary for existence" in the here and now; and, (7) the "eucharistic" view.

Views (3), (4) and (5) have been the strongest contenders in recent scholarship. The "eschatological" view (5) is weak on both etymological and social-context grounds, the strength of views (3) and (4). A choice between views (3) and (4) is difficult, but, from the above analysis, the phrase τὸν άρτον ήμων τὸν ἐπιούσιον

-όν, 2. Last line removed and replaced with: However, on this meaning, ἐπιούσιος becomes redundant since σήμερον is found in the second half of the line.


131 Derived from the verb ἐπιέναι, "to come to," it was a popular view noted by Jerome Comm. in Matt 6:11. He states that he had found "maar" (i.e., ἤμον, "tomorrow") in the Hebrew of the Gospel of the Nazarenes. Supported by Cullmann, Prayer, 53; Luz, Matthew 1-7, 381; Wiefel, Matthaüs, 134.

132 Also derived from the verb ἐπιέναι "to come to," but here imagined as the great eschatological "tomorrow" (i.e., the eschatological banquet). Proponents include: Brown, "Pater Noster," 194–199; Jeremias, Prayers, 100–102; Lohmeyer, The Lord's Prayer, 141–151; Stendahl, Meanings, 119–120. The view requires it be read within the wider parabolic teachings of Jesus. Cullmann, Prayer, 53, notes that this view fails to take the immediately natural sense of the petition and that it is another form of "spiritualization" of "our bread."

133 Origen derived the word from ἐπί and οὐσία, "with the purpose [ἐπί] of existence [οὐσία],” Betz, Sermon, 398–399, favours this "provisionally,” and Fitzmyer, Luke, 2:905, says: "Even though one encounters difficulty in saying what the underlying Aramaic might have been for this meaning of the adjective, it is still the best explanation of the Greek word in the existing prayer.” He also says it is commensurate with Matt 6:8, 25–34; 7:7–11: "It fits into the theological framework of the Lord’s Prayer as well as of the S[ermon on the ]M[ount…] and has religious and cultural support in Hellenistic texts” (399). Origen gave it an allegorical meaning based on John 6. Luz, Matthew 1-7, 381, says this view is weak etymologically since the iota (ι) in the preposition ἐπί tended to elide in compounds, and that more common Greek words were available to express the same sentiment (with which Cullmann, Prayer, 53, concurs). The latter argument is true of most of the views, but etymologically this view is more suspect than the others.

134 So also Schnackenburg, All Things, 83–84. See Karris, Prayer and the NT, 19–24, for a survey of the various perspectives from recent "Jesus scholars" on this petition.
can be satisfactorily comprehended in view (3) to mean "our required food for the day (that lies ahead)."\(^{137}\)

The fourth petition also resonates with the prayer encouragements and promises in Matthew 6:8 and 7:7–11 (par. Luke 11:9–13). Specifically, the verb διδόωνατ ("to give") forms the basis of the request both in the fourth petition (aorist δός in Matt 6:11; present διδοο in Luke 11:3) and the prayer promises (Matt 7:7, 11 [twice] par. Luke 11:9, 13 [twice]), thereby highlighting the Father's generosity, from whom everyday needs are to be sought. The Father not only knows the pressing needs of the disciples (Matt 6:8), but he also provides for them (6:25–34) as they ask him (Matt 6:11).\(^{138}\) And yet, in the same way as the story of the collection of manna in the wilderness by Israel (Exod 16) was intended to point beyond "mere" food, so also the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer should not be limited to material things.\(^{139}\) A similar point will be made in the next chapter with respect to Luke 11:13, where Jesus promises that the Father longs to give the "Holy Spirit."\(^{140}\)

In essence, the fourth petition is a request for the provision of today's sustenance and is tied to the prayer promises about God's generosity found throughout the Synoptic Gospels. Its suggestive and malleable language carries it

\(^{137}\) So also Gerhardsson, "Matthean Version," 215.

\(^{138}\) Paul S. Minear, "The Home of the Our Father," Worship 74 (2000): 219, wisely comments that since sparrows do fall to the ground (10:29) the petition is not a guarantee of freedom from hunger.

\(^{139}\) Luz, Matthew 1-7, 383; cf. Cullmann, Prayer, 22. The quote from Deuteronomy 8:2–3 in the first of his temptations (Matt 4:4 par. Luke 4:4) links "bread" with other necessities for which God must be trusted. The feeding accounts of the Gospels (Mark 6:30–44 par. Matt 14:13–21; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–13; Mark 8:1–9 par. Matt 15:32–39) echo the fourth petition. Jesus commands the disciples, "You give them something to eat" (δότε αὐτοῖς ὀμηνίς φαγεῖν, Matt 14:16 par. Mark 6:37; Luke 9:13). They do not know "where" to find even the money to buy so much food. Yet with five loaves and two fish, Jesus feeds the crowds, including the disciples in the process of "giving" the food to the assembled crowds (Matt 14:19 [twice] par. Mark 6:41; Luke 9:16; cf. Matt 15:36 [twice] par. Mark 8:6). The later reinforcement of this lesson (Matt 16:5–12 par. Mark 8:14–21) and Jesus' teaching about the dangers of looking only at physical needs leads Jesus to criticise the disciples. Matthew frequently reminds readers of the disciples' "little faith" (8:26; 14:31; 16:8; 17:17, 20; cf. 6:30), warning them of their closeness to "this generation" (17:17; cf. 11:16; 12:39, 41, 42, 45; 16:4; 23:36; 24:34). The provision of food in the wilderness was intended to bring the disciples (and Israel) to trust God for all things, and the fourth petition may legitimately be looked at in this light.

\(^{140}\) The extent to which Jesus, in the fourth petition, is not only echoing the manna episode but deliberately referring to it by way of "claim" is a question not able to be answered in this context; see Wright, The Lord and His Prayer, 36–47.
into the framework of faith and the divine purpose unveiled in Jesus' mission to Israel, a mission spearheaded by his announcement of the arrival of the kingdom of God. In the provision of daily food is found a testimony of God's wider intention for the disciples to trustingly receive his sustenance through his Son. The "eschatological" view of the petition—that it requests the food of a future messianic feast—is included in the wider reaches of the petition, but is not the primary target, which is the here-and-now needs of the community of believers ("give us our daily bread"). And yet, here-and-now necessities must not be separated from the arrival of the kingdom of God in the proclamation and ministry of Jesus.

b. The Fifth Petition: "Forgive Us Our Sins As We Ourselves Have Forgiven the Sins of Others"\[141\]


Matt 6:12: \(\text{καὶ ἀδελφὲς ἡμῖν τὰ ὀφειλήματα ἡμῶν,}

\(\text{ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν τοῖς ὀφειλέταις ἡμῶν;}\)

Luke 11:4: \(\text{καὶ ἀδελφὲς ἡμῖν τὰς ὀμηρίας ἡμῶν,}

\(\text{καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ἀφίῳμεν παντὶ ὀφείλοντι ἡμῖν;}\)

The fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer places the forgiveness of sins at the centre of the petition. Forgiveness through repentance of sins was a feature of both John the Baptist's and Jesus' ministry (Mark 1:4; Matt 3:2; Mark 1:15; Matt 4:17; 11:20-24 par. Luke 10:13-15; Luke 13:3, 5; Luke 15:7, 10), yet not one that was common in the Old Testament or late Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism.\[142\] Jesus' controversial pronouncement of here-and-now forgiveness to the paralysed man (Mark 2:5-10 par. Matt 9:2-6; Luke 5:20-24) and to the woman who washed his feet in a Pharisee's house (Luke 7:48-49), may be cited as evidence of this feature of Jesus' ministry.\[143\] (This is not to suggest uniqueness, however, since both the Old Testament and later Jewish prayers evidence the need for forgiveness and contain

\[142\] Dunn, *Jesus Remembered*, 1:358-360. Dunn summarises the questions over why John's baptism was a "once only" event rather than a regular one like the purification washings found in contemporary forms of Judaism. Too much may be made of this point, however, since the sacrificial system was not intended to cover sins committed with a "high hand." Heb 9:7 draws subtle attention to this point while the story of the forgiveness of David exemplifies it (2 Sam 12:1-23; Ps 51).

\[143\] The connection of the offering of forgiveness and healing—also an OT pair (e.g., Ps 103:3)—indicates the former is one of a number of interconnected elements in Jesus' mission to Israel and that it should not be isolated as a critique of the sacrificial system *per se* (cf. Mark 1:44 par. Matt 8:4; cf. Luke 17:14).
penitential prayers [e.g., Pss 6, 51; 1QS 1:24b–26; Shemoneh Esreh 6]). The first part of the fifth petition thus fits well with Jesus' overall proclamation and its context.

The second part of the petition—the conditional necessity of forgiving others—is more distinctive within contemporary Judaism. The feature is found in other parts of the Synoptic Gospels (Matt 5:23–24; 6:12, 14–15; 18:15, 21–22; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:37; 11:4; 17:3–4) and is portrayed vividly in parables (Matt 18:23–35; Luke 15:11–32). The New Testament places mutual forgiveness as a central part of community life (e.g., 2 Cor 2:7, 10; Eph 4:32; Col 3:13; Jas 5:15–16).

The word translated "sins" in most modern versions of Matthew 6:12 is used elsewhere to refer to a "(financial) debt" or "obligation in a moral sense" (τὰ ὀφειλήματα). Indeed, apart from the Lord's Prayer, ὀφειλήμα is not used with the verb ἁφίημι to mean "sin." Recent scholarship has therefore questioned whether—given Jesus' mostly loan-dependent agrarian–peasant audience—the metaphorical meaning of τὰ ὀφειλήματα (i.e., "sins") should not be replaced by its

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144 See Mark J. Boda, Daniel K. Falk, and Rodney A. Werline, eds., Seeking the Favor of God: Volume 1, The Origins of Penitential Prayer in Second Temple Judaism (OPPSTJ 21; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), for fresh discussion on this important context, and Catchpole, Jesus People, 149–150, for consideration of how distinctive Jesus' offer of forgiveness really was.

145 The often quoted exception is Sir 28:2: "Forgive your neighbour the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray" (NRSV). The context here is a paraenesis against anger and vengeance (27:30–28:11) in which 28:2 forms one of a number of arguments against such behaviour.

146 Questions are raised on whether Mark 11:25 originated with Matthew 6:14–15 (e.g., Stendahl, Meanings, 116). There is no MS of Mark without v. 25 and there are sufficient differences to suggest more than one source was available for the Synoptic authors on this question.

147 While there is a strong "community" interest in the injunctions (e.g., Matt 18:15–20, 35) that can easily be attributed to the influence of early Christians on the Synoptic Gospels (e.g., Dunn, Jesus Remembered, 1:590, "This tradition certainly reflects later situations in the life of the churches known to Matthew"), its frequency throughout the gospels and its connection with Jesus' pronouncement of divine forgiveness testifies to originality within the proclamation of Jesus.

148 BDAG, 743, ὀφειλήμα. 2. Matthew uses this word again in the parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt 18:24, 28, 30, 32, 34), but is not wedded to it (cf. 6:14, 15; 18:22). The most likely Aramaic word behind ὀφειλήμα, נזיר, can be rendered by either ὀφειλήμα or ἀμαρτία; so Betz, Sermon, 401; Cullmann, Prayer, 55; Nolland, Matthew, 290, so there are grounds for doubt over the correct translation.

149 Rudolf Bultmann, "ἀφίημι, κτλ.", TDNT 1: 509–511; the article focuses overmuch on the eschatological aspects of forgiveness realised for the individual and little on the mutual obligations of forgiveness. More balanced is, H. Leroy, "ἀφίημι, ἡφεσις," EDNT 1: 181.
common meaning of financial debts. Luke's version of the fifth petition (Luke 11:4) uses "sins" (τὰς ἁμαρτίας) in the first line, but reverts to debt imagery in the second line (παντὶ ὁφεὶλοντι), pointing to a metaphorical use of the noun there (cf. Luke 7:41). The final difficulty with the view that ὁφεὶλημα in the second part of the petition refers to a financial debt is that the same sense must be taken in the first part of the petition. This rendering would not make sense since it is not God who has imposed the financial debt. It seems best, then, to remain with the traditional translation/interpretation bearing in mind the important overtones about the nature of sin picked up by Jesus in his teaching through this metaphor.

The conditional relationship of the first and second parts of the fifth petition has caused concern among pastors and scholars alike. It is complicated by the connecting particle, which is different in Matthew and Luke. Matthew's second line begins with "as we also" (ὡς καὶ ἡμεῖς; cf. Did 8.2) while Luke has "for [we]..."
ourselves also” (καὶ γὰρ ὑμοί). However, no matter which version is chosen it is a theological problem rather than an interpretive one. The intent of the condition is to pose the question of whether the experience of God's mercy has been translated into relationships with others (Matt 18:33; Luke 7:41–43). According to Jesus, judgement awaits all who fail this vital and frequently mentioned community test (note, Matt 18:35). Perhaps this is the best explanation for the awkward conditional language: it is a self-administered test. While one is praying it acts as a warning (e.g., Matt 6:14, 15; 18:35)—as if one were going to make a sacrifice and in the act remembered a relational breach that needed mending (5:23–24).

Moreover, if—as is most likely—the petition is prayed in a community context, then it is a warning that hangs over the petitionary prayer life of the whole congregation (Mark 11:25; 1 Cor 11:27–32; Jas 4:2; 3; 5:14–16; 1 Pet 3:7; 1 John 3:19–24). It is not a one-off condition, but a timeless principle, as the aorist ἀφίκαμεν indicates. Its conditional nature is accentuated by its position relative to the fourth petition in which petitioners make their most open and basic request.

An unbreakable connection is made in this petition between vertical forgiveness by God and horizontal relationships with other human beings. This connection acts as a condition upon successful petition in the Lord's Prayer as a whole and is repeated elsewhere in the Synoptic Gospels and the New Testament (Matt 6:14–15; Mark 11:25; 1 Cor 11:27–32; Jas 4:2, 3; 5:14–16; 1 Pet 3:7; 1 John 3:19–24). The basis of the petition appears to be that the Lord's Prayer is prayed to a God who is "our Father." Denying another's forgiveness ultimately brings disrepute upon God's name since he is also the other person's Father in heaven who forgives.

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153 Connected to this is the fact that while both Matthew and Luke use the aorist imperative in the request ("forgive" ἀφεῖς), Matthew uses the perfect indicative "as we have forgiven" (ἀφίκαμεν) while Luke has the present "as we (are) forgiving" (ἀφίομεν, and Did 8.2) in the conditional part of the petition. The difference between the two is slight. Perhaps Matthew implies complete forgiveness for specific sins while Luke implies a general attitude.

154 Dunn, Jesus Remembered, 1:591, says searching for a solution is "futile" if one wishes to place divine forgiveness before human forgiveness or the other way around (even though one may wish to do this theologically to avoid synergism or making demands on God).


156 See Stendahl, Meanings, 115–125, for discussion on this theme.

157 Porter, Verbal Aspect, 129–130, 234. The other alternative is that it is a stative aorist; so Fanning, Verbal Aspect, 281.
them when they ask. Not forgiving another becomes a barrier to petitionary prayer because it denies the very foundation of God's familial generosity.

c. The Sixth Petition: "Do Not Lead Us into Temptation, but Deliver Us from Evil"  

Luke 11:4: καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν

Matthew and Luke agree word-for-word on the first part of the sixth petition, but Matthew's version qualifies it with a final plea: "But deliver us from evil" (ἀλλὰ ρύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ), which could (and often is) treated as a separate seventh petition. The sixth petition has particular relevance to the thesis question because it introduces in a formal way the role of evil, or the "evil one," into the struggle that faces the petitioner and threatens the success of petitionary prayer.

The issues of the first half of the sixth petition (ἀλλὰ ρύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ) have been well-delineated in past research: (1) should μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς be


159 Does the second part of the petition go back to Jesus? The view that it is a later expansion or explanation of the first part of the petition is frequently made and has merit (e.g., this is the only double imperative petition). See Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:615, for discussion. Yet the sentiment of the second half of the petition is not without resonances in the Jesus tradition (e.g., Luke 22:30), and in contemporary Judaism (Sir 33:1), so its originality should not be dismissed out of hand. See Nolland, Matthew, 292 n. 341, for discussion.

translated so as to imply divine involvement (either directly or indirectly, "lead us not...") or should it be seen as preventative ("cause us not to be led...")? The verb εἰσφέρειν in the active voice literally means to "bring in" (e.g., Luke 5:18), but it has a causative meaning as well, "to have brought in" (e.g., Acts 17:20)—its probable meaning in this petition.\(^{161}\)

(2) Does πείρασμός refer to: (a) a test from God intended to prove the quality of the believer's faith; (b) a testing of God by the believer; (c) a here-and-now temptation of the believer to apostasy; or, (d) the time of extreme unrest and evil predicted to occur immediately before the beginning of the new age (known as the "Great Tribulation")? No firm consensus exists on either of these questions at the present time.\(^{162}\)

What complicates the exegesis of the sixth petition is the role of God in human temptation and hence his relationship with evil, including the question of theodicy.\(^{163}\) While Scripture and Jewish tradition regularly portray God as testing his people (e.g., Gen 22:1–2; Heb 11:17),\(^{164}\) there is hesitation to attribute temptation to God—indeed it is proscribed (so, Jas 1:13: "God himself tempts [πείρασμα] no one").\(^{165}\) In contemporary Jewish tradition there arose a strong desire to protect God from the accusation of wrongdoing and attribute the cause of sin to wrong choices by the human.\(^{166}\) Later Christians also moved in this direction as evidenced by their

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\(^{161}\) See BDAG, 295, εἰσφέρω; Fitzmyer, "Temptation," 259–260. The translation of this verse in modern versions of the Lord's Prayer as "save us from the time of trial," is for this reason alone indefensible. See McCaughey, "Matthew 6:13a," 31–40, for argument.

\(^{162}\) See the note at the beginning of this section for a representative sample of views. For additional material on the "testing tradition" in Jewish thought prior to Jesus see Susan R. Garrett, The Temptations of Jesus in Mark's Gospel (Grand Rapids, Mich./Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 1998), 19–49.

\(^{163}\) See Betz, Sermon, 405–408, for a summary of issues, and Garrett, Temptations, 44–48, for the perception of the roles of God and Satan within the Pseudepigrapha and the NT.


\(^{165}\) Compare, Sirach 15:11–12:

11 Do not say, "It was the Lord's doing that I fell away"; for he does not do [Heb; Gk "you ought not to do"] what he hates.
12 Do not say, "It was he who led me astray"; for he has no need of the sinful. (NRSV)

\(^{166}\) Sirach 15:14–16:
translations of the sixth petition, which asked God to prevent petitioners succumbing to temptation. This attempt to protect God from accusation brings this petition down to the lowest common denominator, for it implies that God has no day-to-day power over evil, which affects all humans. However, the Lord's Prayer assumes that God can and does control evil. The second half of the sixth petition requests release from evil (or, the evil one), and the first three petitions ask God to bring glory to his name through his sovereign kingship (see also Matt 6:8, 25–34), so there is no need to protect God's reputation here.

The delicacy of the problem that confronts interpreters in the sixth petition is well-expressed by Fitzmyer, "[I]t is one thing to say that 'God tempts no one,' and quite another, that God 'leads us into temptation.'" One solution to this dilemma, alluded to above, is to interpose third parties between God and the human subject who is undergoing temptation. While Scripture refuses to say God entices human beings to sin (Jas 1:13), it does attribute testing to God and recognizes that such testing may lead to apostasy (e.g., Israel in the wilderness).

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14 It was he who created humankind in the beginning, and he left them in the power of their own free choice.
15 If you choose, you can keep the commandments, and to act faithfully is a matter of your own choice.
16 He has placed before you fire and water; stretch out your hand for whichever you choose.
17 Before each person are life and death, and whichever one chooses will be given. (NRSV, emphasis added)

167 See e.g., Fitzmyer, "Temptation," 265–266, for a review. This conclusion was bolstered by an argument based on backtranslations of the verb into Aramaic (or Hebrew), and an example from rabbinic Judaism (b. Ber 60b; 5th c. A.D.), which result in a permissive meaning, "do not allow me to succumb"; see Jeremias, Prayers, 104–105, for an example. For more examples of rabbinic material see Garland, "The Lord's Prayer," 225–226. See Fitzmyer, "Temptation," 268–271, and Jean Carmignac, "Fais que nous n'entriions pas dans la tentation': La portée d'une négation devant un verbe au causatif," RB 72 (1965): 218–226, for a critique of the permissive readings.
168 So, rightly, Cullmann, Prayer, 64.
169 Fitzmyer, "Temptation," 265.
170 Porter, "'Lead us not into temptation'," 361, argues that Jas 1:13 is irregular in its refusal to connect God with temptation and should be set to one side. This seems extreme; Scripture has a range of approaches to this sensitive topic. In 1 Cor 10:13, for example, Paul does not isolate the readers in their own responsibility for sin but puts before them the fact of God's grace in the midst of temptation/testing. This question of the divine hand in testing is pertinent to the Gethsemane prayer where no other way was provided for Jesus than the "cup" he had been given to drink.
hand, is portrayed as the *agent* of testing and temptation (e.g., Job 1, 2), ensuring that God's direct hand is not involved.

Many scholars have taken the noun πειρασμός here to refer to the "Great Tribulation (or, Ordeal)." In essence, the argument is that if Jesus is introducing the disciples to *his own* prayer then he is referring to his own wish not to go through that final ordeal, a wish that appears to be reflected in his Gethsemane prayer (Mark 14:36 par. Matt 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42; see ch. IV below). The acceptance of this view of πειρασμός is mounting among scholars, but two points should be raised against it. First, whenever πειρασμός or the verb πειράζειν are clearly used to refer to the great or final test in the New Testament, specific qualifications with respect to end-time trials are also found (e.g., Rev 3:10; Matt 26:41). No such qualifications are found here in the Lord's Prayer, but the context of the Gethsemane prayer infers *both* the Great Tribulation and the present hour of temptation (Mark 14:38 par. Matt 26:41; Luke 22:39, 46), as will be shown in Chapter IV. Second, if—as appears likely—the Great Tribulation in late Second Temple Judaism and in the New Testament is inevitable and the testing of the people of God within it is also inevitable, then requesting *not* to be led into it is a denial of its necessity. It is more likely, then, that πειρασμός in the Lord's Prayer does not refer primarily to the Great Tribulation, but, as in the rest of the New Testament, "to the constant danger of

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171 In the temptation narratives, for example, the gospels say Jesus is "driven out" (ἐκβάλλει, Mark 1:12) or "brought out" (ἀνήχθη, Matt 4:1) into the wilderness by the Spirit of God in order to be tempted by the devil (purposive infinitive, πειράζειν, Matt 4:1). See Fitzmyer, "Temptation," 262.

172 Allison, *End of the Ages*, 5–25; and, Pitre, *Tribulation*, 41–130, have outlined the positions on this event within the material of Second Temple Judaism. For argument that πειρασμός refers to the final ordeal, see Brown, "Pater Noster," 205–208; and, Pitre, *Tribulation*, 132–159. Pitre admits the interpretation of the "application of daily tests faced by the disciples," but says the petition "should be interpreted primarily in an eschatological context as referring to the tribulation of the latter days" (158).

173 McCaughey, "Matthew 6:13a," 31–34; Porter, "Lead us not into temptation," 360. Gibson, "An Eschatological Prayer?,” 98, argues that the petition refers to the testing of God by the disciples. This may be the case as an outcome of giving into temptation, but it must be read into the petition from contexts which already assume this perspective. For a similar conclusion, see Grayston, "Decline of Temptation," 292–295. In the end, this view makes the petition request that the Father not lead one into apostasy, which is even worse than being led into temptation!

174 This is surely Jesus' dilemma in Luke 12:50, 51, and Mark 10:38, 39 and parallels. Of the 16 texts examined by Pitre, 14 refer to the fact that "[t]he righteous suffer and/or die during the tribulation (Pitre, *Tribulation*, 128, emphasis original).
the faithful in the world here and now (1 Thess 3:5; 1 Cor 7:5; Gal 6:1; 1 Cor 10:13).”\(^{175}\) According to Luke's Gospel, Satan endeavours to bring the believer into apostasy (Luke 22:31; also 8:13; 22:40, 46), and this can occur in any test/temptation.\(^{176}\) Once again, however, it is not a question of either the Great Tribulation or daily temptation. The disciples are urged to pray that, in the light of the looming crisis, they not be led into unfaithfulness before God through the enticement of sin.

Perhaps a better way to look at this petition is to say that, since the kingdom of God has broken in upon the realm of Satan through Jesus' ministry (Mark 3:22–27 par. Matt 12:24–29; Luke 11:15–22), a battle is being fought every day and violence has resulted (Matt 11:12 par. Luke 16:16; Matt 10:34; 12:30 par. Luke 11:23): a state of war now exists.\(^{177}\) If the kingdom of God is "already" and "not yet," then the Great Tribulation may be considered along the same lines. The implication of this petition, then, is that just as Jesus endured his trials—and the disciples were with him in them—so they will have trials, and must ask the Father to spare them from falling (Luke 22:31–32).

What if they do fall? The second part of the petition is clearly directed here. Whether \(\tau\omega\nu\ \rho\omicron\nu\omicron\rho\omicron\sigma\omega\) should be translated as the masculine "evil one" (i.e. "the devil" or "Satan") or as the neuter "evil," the focus is on the situation in which one finds oneself—be it in the grip of Satan, evil, or harmful circumstances as a result of succumbing to temptation.\(^{178}\)

\(^{175}\) Kuhn, "New Light," 95.

\(^{176}\) In the Garden of Gethsemane the disciples are urged to, "watch and pray so as not to enter into temptation, for the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (\(\gamma\rho\eta\gamma\omicron\rho\omicron\epsilon'i\tau\epsilon\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \pi\omicron\sigma\sigma\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\chi\epsilon\sigma\omicron\sigma\omicron\dot{e}\,\iota\varsigma\ \mu\eta\ \epsilon\iota\sigma\epsilon\lambda\dot{a}\theta\iota\tau\epsilon\iota\eta\epsilon\;\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \pi\epsilon\iota\rho\omicron\sigma\alpha\omicron\phi\omicron\nu\omicron\nu\omicron\nu\) \(\tau\omicron\nu\ \mu\enom\nu\ \pi\nu\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\mu\omicron\nu\ \pi\omicron\theta\omicron\theta\omicron\omicron\nu\omicron\nu\omicron\nu\) \(\dot{e}\ \delta\epsilon\ \sigma\alpha\omicron\rho\omicron\dot{e}\ \alpha\omicron\theta\omicron\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu\)\); Matt 26:41 par. Mark 14:38; Luke 22:40, 46). Note that here the word \(\pi\epsilon\iota\rho\OMICRON\omicron\omicron\omicron\nu\) again occurs without the article and probably refers to any event or influence that fails to realise the moment of Jesus' trial and endure with him in it. See ch. IV below, for further comments on this passage.

\(^{177}\) See Kuhn, "New Light," 96–108, for discussion.

\(^{178}\) The use of the definite article does not guarantee the personal use of \(\rho\omicron\nu\omicron\rho\omicron\sigma\omicron\dot{e}\). Based on the argument above, a non-eschatological understanding of the first part of the petition requires that this continue into the second, connected as it is by the adversative conjunction \(\dot{a}l\acute{a}\)\. The OT is replete with examples of God rescuing his people from harm; see A. Hamman, Prayer: The New Testament (trans. Paul J. Oligny; Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1971), 133–134. A. Edward Milton, "Deliver Us from the Evil Imagination": Matt. 6:13b in Light of the Jewish Doctrine of the \(\nu\epsilon\omicron\sigma\epsilon\omicron\nu\omicron\nu\omicron\nu\)\, RelStTh 15 (1995): 53–67, argues that the petition refers to the "evil
The sixth petition, then, points to the fact that the Father will hear petitions in the midst of all kinds of trials, whether they be of the petitioner's own making or not. It directs attention to the battle that ensued the moment Jesus was baptised and driven by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by Satan (Mark 1:13 par. Matt 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13). Jesus' ministry was a battle in which he both rejoiced in victory (Luke 10:18), and yet sensed a future conflict that would seize him with distress (Luke 12:50; Mark 14:33, 34 and parallels). This struggle—penultimately endured in Gethsemane—was preceded by others (cf. Luke 22:28; see ch. III.C below).

Trials—either in the form of sin or persecution—are also the lot of the disciples. As the exegesis of the Gethsemane prayer will show, the cosmic battle Jesus wages overflows onto the "ordinary" Christian in the form of temptations to turn from the way of the Son who struggled victoriously before them (cf. Heb 2:18; 4:14–16; 5:7–10; 2 Cor 1:2–11). The battle for the Christian has at one level been won, but the fight still goes on until the kingdom is revealed in all its fullness. Prayer for God's protection and help is necessary in this era. God's kingship and will is not limited to the "good things" or daily needs of food, shelter, and clothing, but covers the Christian in testing, temptation, and sin. Petitionary prayer is provided to endure conflict and succeed in the trial, which will be the "norm" for discipleship (Mark 13:13b par. Matt 24:13; Luke 21:19; Luke 18:1–8; Dan 12:12–13; Jas 5:11; Rev 2:11).

d. Conclusion to the "We-Petitions"

The three "we-petitions" are probably an intentional balance to the three "you petitions" of the first part of the Lord's Prayer. A one-for-one correspondence is not inclination" (יְשֶׁר הָרָע). The evidence of either the evil or the good inclinations in the NT is ambiguous. It may be said that, generally, the NT has a cosmic rather than an individual view of sin, moved by good or evil impulses. Qumran seems to have held a similar stance, though the "evil inclination" is found there also. For further comments on this matter see ch. VII.B.2.

The imperfect έθεόπον may be iterative, perhaps referring to the temptation in the wilderness (Matt 4:1–11 par. Luke 4:1–13), and to the healings and exorcisms he performed.

It is of interest that in the Parable of the Sower, Jesus interprets the rocky soil as those who endure for a while but fall away when the heat of persecution comes (Mark 4:17 par. Matt 13:21). The parallel text in Luke 8:13 uses πεπροσμος for this time of testing of those who believe for a while but then fall away.

Schnackenburg, All Things, 88, suggests that all the petitions of the Lord's Prayer may well have been forged in Jesus' temptations in the wilderness.
apparent, but a sense of completion or overall coverage should be concluded from this balance. The "we-petitions" are probably best viewed as actualisations of the "you-petitions," especially the second and third petitions (for the kingdom and the will of God), rather than moving in an opposite or this-worldly direction.

In the petition for "daily bread" is found the permission and encouragement to seek God's face for all of life's needs. To narrow down the petition to eschatological bread removes it from the hand-to-mouth existence of so many of Jesus' hearers (and so many who pray this prayer today). The fourth petition testifies to the generosity of the Father toward his people who call upon his name (cf. Ps 145:18–19). This goodness derives from and testifies to an eschatological salvation that has entered into the here and now and is being signified in the meals Jesus shared with others and spoke of in his parables. The superabundant supply of bread/manna in the wilderness directs attention to food which does not perish and the bread of the Last Supper is portrayed as a participation in Jesus' self-giving (see chap IV.2.d.i below). The fourth petition stands at the heart of God's promise to answer his people's prayers.

In the fifth petition, forgiveness of sins is made a "core-value" of the kingdom and of the community of disciples. Divine forgiveness is obtained by prayer, but prayer is inhibited if the forgiveness received is not transferred into horizontal relationships. This condition is found in other New Testament prayer teaching.

The final petition of the Lord's Prayer directs petitioners to the reality of spiritual warfare for the children of the Father who need God to rescue them from every danger and foe, including their own sin and its consequences. Trials are brought upon God's people—ultimately by God himself—and are only endured by petitioning God for help, lest one be carried into temptation. Like Jesus, the community of faith is called to face their trials and temptations squarely and never to become lax. This is not so much a condition as the context for all petitionary prayer.

The "we-petitions," like the "you-petitions," emphasize both promise and condition in petitionary prayer. The desire of God to supply daily needs, to forgive his people, and to rescue them from sin and evil must be conditioned with his desire for them to live lives of forgiveness and to depend upon him when confronted with evil circumstances.

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182 See discussion in Catchpole, *Jesus People*, 148–157
The Lord's Prayer has been found to be a wide-ranging and comprehensive prayer taught by Jesus to the disciples as a model prayer and hence bearing his authority. The prayer is offered to God by a community and is therefore meant to distinguish the life of the people of God.

The prayer begins with an address that marks both the privilege and the cost of kinship with God. The prayer teaching of Jesus as a whole portrays the "Father" as a generous and consistent God who defends the weak and is always on the side of his "little ones whose angels continually behold his face"; petitioners must not mistreat other members of God's family or withhold forgiveness from them. Jesus' own use of the word "Father" as an address in prayer in both joy (Matt 11:25–27 par. Luke 10:21–22) and anguish (Mark 14:36 par. Matt 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42), signifies that other petitioners will experience both success and the lack of it in their prayers. Petitionary prayer, then, is not only about Yes or No, but about a relationship with a Father who must be honoured and yet who is approachable and generous.183

The first petition requests that God sanctify his own name, that is, that he ensures all is done for his glory and not for the glory of others. God's name stands for God's self, his character, and his power. For petitioners to request that his name be set apart must inevitably include their behaviour. True, the background of this petition in Ezekiel 36 points to God's eschatological vindication of his own name, but the Synoptic context of Jesus' ministry points to his passionate desire for righteousness in Israel and among his disciples. For the thesis question in particular, the first petition should be seen as the ultimate condition upon all petition: that God's name be sanctified.

The second petition for the coming of the kingdom of God is placed by many in tandem with the first petition, with both then interpreted in a purely future-eschatological fashion. While this view is true to an extent, it does not take sufficient account of the teaching and healing ministry of Jesus as portrayed in the Synoptic Gospels in which the kingdom of God is present. Jesus sensed the nearness of the kingdom throughout his ministry and ultimately in the Garden of Gethsemane as

judgement. The debate between the eschatological and non-eschatological views of this petition has missed the mark in this respect: the kingdom is both salvation and judgement, in the present and in the future, for both Jesus and the disciples. Nevertheless, the here and now of the kingdom gives tremendous encouragement to petition God for the most astonishing of requests, as will be seen in the next chapter. The second petition, therefore, provides both promise to and limitation upon the petitioner.

The third petition—for God's will to be done—encompasses God's hidden and revealed will. That is, it has in view both the unfolding (eschatological) salvation plan of God (including the response of the disciples to the message and ministry of Jesus) as well as the call to faithfully and submissively obey the Father. Gethsemane becomes the example of how the petition for God's will to be done integrates both personal submission to God and the realisation of God's plan of salvation. The limitation upon Jesus' own petition in the Garden of Gethsemane signals the ongoing limitation of God's will on all petition, but it is not an undefined or deterministic force. Rather, in the here and now, as the disciples submit to the salvation purposes of the Father, they may be assured of the presence of the risen Jesus guiding them to their ultimate reward.

The "we-petitions" turn from the grand themes of God's salvation purposes and glory to the everyday life of God's people. The petition for daily bread refers to both the necessities of life and the spiritual bread of the future banquet of God—again, the "already—not yet" tension is evident. The generosity of the Father is hinted at in the vocabulary of the petition ("give")—a generosity that may be transferred to other needs of a non-physical kind, such as forgiveness. The fifth petition—which specifies the need for forgiveness—places the mercy of God (and the continued sinfulness it implies) at the heart of all prayer. This petition is no perfunctory act for it requires the forgiveness of others. Right relationships within the community of faith are raised as a condition upon successful petition.

The final petition presents the petitioner with the reality of spiritual opposition. This opposition was hinted at in the "you-petitions" and is brought back here by way of two connected requests for prevention from temptation and deliverance from the devil's hands. This petition strikes moderns as strange, but there should be no question that it lay at the centre of Jesus' and his listeners' own lives—as will be seen clearly in the section on prayer in the writings of the apostle Paul (chaps. VIII–XI.
God's holiness does not ultimately separate him from those about to be or who are already caught up within the web of sin or Satan. This petition conveys great confidence to all who pray, and yet it also conveys the shocking realism of the context of petition, a context that appears frequently in New Testament petition.

This chapter began with the intention of showing how the Lord's Prayer contributed to the question of the tension between promise and limitation in petitionary prayer. The question was asked how—if both elements were found in the Lord's Prayer—they could be reconciled. It was noted that a common answer to this question is to say that the first three petitions are theologically prior, that is, for example, the petition for God's will to be done overrides that for daily bread to be given. In this study of the Lord's Prayer such a solution has been found to be rather simplistic. Each of the petitions contains inferences both to promise and limitation upon petition. The interpretation is not primarily about literary priority, but theological integration of all the elements of petition. Of course, not all petitions are at the same point along the spectrum of promise to and limitation upon petition, but no petition—and here the address must also be included—should be seen as totally one-sided on this spectrum. The wider literary and social contexts of the petitions prevented narrowing down their scope. In short, the tension between promise and petition was found to be integral to the Lord's Prayer itself. If it were to be asked why this tension is integral to the prayer the answer would centre upon the nature of Synoptic eschatology, which dictates not only that the kingdom of God is both future and present, but also that the kingdom is dynamically and wondrously unfolding throughout time, even in the midst of suffering and distress. The reconciliation of these "already" and "not yet" aspects is not brought about by cancelling one out, but by realising the existence of both until the consummation of all things. Petitionary prayer lies in the centre of this realisation.

The last point raises another of significance for this thesis as a whole. The Lord's Prayer not only lies in a central position along the promise–limitation spectrum, but also sets up the parameters of the elements that comprise the spectrum. That is, as this investigation proceeds, the Lord's Prayer will be seen to have raised all the key themes that bear upon the relationship between promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer. These are: the "already–not yet" eschatological tension; the integration of God's salvation plan within the daily grit of life's circumstances and its difficulties; the necessity of horizontal forgiveness and
community harmony; the generous and good nature of the Father; and, the reality of evil opposition as the context of all prayer. Jesus' mediation of prayer is the only significant element not found explicitly in the Lord's Prayer that occurs in other prayer promise/limitation texts under investigation. However, the fact that it is Jesus who is requested by the disciples to teach them the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1–2a) and that it is he who positions himself as the one through whom the Father is known by the disciples (Matt 11:25–27 par. Luke 10:21–22), indicates that Jesus' mediation may be assumed in this the model prayer.
III. THE SYNOPTIC PRAYER PROMISES

A. Introduction

It was suggested in the preceding chapter that the Lord's Prayer sets the contextual and theological parameters of the tension between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer in the Synoptic Gospels. It was also found that, to one degree or another, all the petitions of the Lord's Prayer implied both promise to and restriction upon petition. The Synoptic Gospels also contain specific promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer that may now be brought into this framework. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the prayer promises of the Synoptic Gospels and to determine their impact on the thesis question. The next chapter will consider the strongest limitation upon petition in the New Testament, Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane.

The prayer promises of the Synoptic Gospels are a feature of Jesus' teaching ministry. Apart from the promises in the Synoptic Gospels (to be examined in this chapter), the Gospel of John contains a string of promises that are equally striking (John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26–27; see ch. VI.C below). Two kinds of prayer promises are found in the Synoptic Gospels. The first kind is offered without any explicit limiting conditions and is contained within Jesus' teaching in the gospels of Matthew and Luke (Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13). The second kind occurs after miracles or exorcisms and is offered with explicit conditions upon the petitioner (Mark 9:29; and, Mark 11:22–25 par. Matt 21:21–22; cf. Luke 17:5–6). Some scholars argue that the two forms of promise were related in an earlier stage than that which is now present in the Synoptic Gospels, however the existence of both forms in quite specific and distinctive contexts points to an early independence from each other.

The open-ended and bold nature of these prayer promises causes embarrassment to many scholars, which has influenced their interpretation. The aim of the present chapter is to interpret the Synoptic prayer promises within their literary, historical, and theological contexts in order to determine exactly what is promised to petition and, if possible, why it is promised. Of course, these prayer promises need to be balanced by other prayer teachings in the Synoptic Gospels and
indeed the New Testament canon, but every effort will be made to "hear" the promises as they were intended to be heard by the gospels' readers. Because of their simplicity, the unconditional promises (Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13) will be examined first.


The prayer promise found in Matthew 7:7–11 and Luke 11:9–13 is composed of two parts: (1) a repeated exhortation to ask in prayer each followed by a related promise (Matt 7:7–8 par. Luke 11:9–10) followed by, (2) similitudes and a concluding promise (Matt 7:9–11 par. Luke 11:11–13). As noted above, this promise is without conditions and so is the least restrictive of all the prayer promises in the New Testament. The unit's cadence, simplicity, composure, and warm encouragement to pray, all work towards the goal of stimulating petition.¹

No firm agreement has been reached on the source or tradition history of the unit's components, with many scholars suggesting the two parts were originally separate.² It appears more probable that the unit existed as a whole from the beginning—or at least before employment by the evangelists—than that it was brought together from two or more previously existing parts.³ The unity of the second part with the first part is maintained through shared vocabulary and shared theological completeness.⁴

¹ See Luz, Matthew 1-7, 423–425, for a history of interpretation and use.
³ So also Minear, Commands of Christ, 117. See discussion in Auvinen, Prayer, 150–151. The second part would make little sense without the first and the idea of similitudes floating without a referent is not persuasive.
⁴ It is also more probable that both gospel writers obtained the unit from a common source than found it as an independent logion and made their own way with it. Even though there are substantial differences between Matthew and Luke in the order and
The literary contexts of the two versions of this prayer promise differ from each other. The Matthean version (Matt 7:7–11) comes at the conclusion of Jesus' instructions to the disciples in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5:17–7:12). Many commentators have wondered at the placement of these prayer promises, with one concluding that it has "no real connection with the material that precedes or follows it." Davies and Allison argue for a parallel structure between Matthew 6:19–34 and 7:1–12, with the final unit of both sections offering encouragement to listeners by drawing attention to the heavenly Father's love (each unit employs a "lesser to the greater" argument [6:25–34; 7:7–11]). It must be admitted that the immediately preceding material (7:1–6) makes for a jarring introduction to the positive prayer promises. The first part of the unit (7:1–5) returns readers to the theme of hypocrisy, a favourite theme of Matthew (e.g., the instructions on piety in 6:1–18), while the second part (7:6) fits more with the style of the mission discourse sayings of Matthew 10:11–15. As a whole, Matthew 7:1–6 convey the message that the disciple is to be aware that the teaching of Jesus has come from God (i.e., it is holy) and is not to be toyed with. Matthew 7:12 (the "Golden Rule") follows the prayer promises in Matthew and is connected to them by "therefore" (οὖν). There is no direct relationship with the prayer promises, however, as the οὖν in Matthew 7:12 looks back to the whole of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount, beginning with 5:17 that spoke of a righteousness that was not contrary to "the law or the prophets" (τὸν νόμον ἡ τούς προφήτας; note, ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται in 7:12). In content of the two similitudes (Matt 7:9, 10 par. Luke 11:11, 12), the essential point of both versions is the same.


6 Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:677–678.

7 Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:674, see v. 6 as correction or modification of vv. 1–5 ("gemara"). This may be true, but would conflict with the community inferences of "brother" in vv. 3–5. In Matt 18:15–18 strict rules of "judging" are laid down for disciples. Matthew 7:6 appears to be aimed at outsiders, that is, non-Christ-followers, rather than Gentiles per se. Nolland, Matthew, 321–324, provides a recent detailed summary and offers the view that the verse corresponds to Matt 6:24, which calls for complete dedication to God.

8 Davies and Allison, Matthew, 686; Luz, Matthew 1-7, 427; Nolland, Matthew, 328. The teaching of the Golden Rule is duty to others rather than to God and so is not a fair summary of much of 6:1–7:11, which focus on the vertical axis of righteousness.
short, the literary context of the Matthean version of the prayer promise continues themes raised in the prayer material found in Matthew 6:5–15. It concludes the main body of the Sermon on the Mount by ensuring that listeners remain dependent and hopeful upon the Father.

The Lukan prayer promise (11:9–13) belongs to a unit (Luke 11:1–13) that occurs early in the Travel Narrative (9:51–19:44). The prayer promise in Luke 11:9–13 follows the Parable of the Friend at Midnight (11:5–8). These two units are connected syntactically ("and I tell you" [καὶ λέγω ὃμιλν], v. 9a; note, v. 8a), thematically (both rely upon a need and making a request) and linguistically (the use of διδόναι or cognates in vv. 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13), and should therefore be read together. The Lord's Prayer (11:2b–4, preceded by the prayer notation and disciple's request, 11:1–2a) comes at the head of the section (11:1–13). The Lord's Prayer is less tightly connected to what follows ("and he said to them" [καὶ εἶπεν πρός αὐτοὺς], v. 5a), but the thematic relationships are obvious. The whole of Luke 11:1–13 is rightly considered a prayer instruction unit, which begins and ends with God addressed as "Father" (vv. 2b, 13) and whose key verb is διδόναι ("to give," vv. 3, 8 [twice], 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 [twice]). Since the parable of the Friend at Midnight (11:5–8) looks forward to the prayer promise (vv. 9–13, especially vv. 9–10) for rhetorical completion, some coverage of it is needed here.

The parable of the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5–8) has a simple story and only three characters: (1) the guest who arrives unexpectedly at the house of (2) the host, who then visits (3) the sleeper—a friend or neighbour—to obtain food to serve his guest. The climax of the parable in verse 8 states that it is not because of And yet verse 12 does resonate at one level with the prayer promise of verses 7–11 with its unlimited command to do for others "all things whatsoever you would have men do for you" (πάντα οὖν δίκα ἐὰν θέλητε ἵνα ποιῶσιν ὑμῖν οἱ ἀνθρωποι). Perhaps at a thematic level, the preceding unit (7:1–6) and following context of the prayer promise sets moral limits on petitions. Petitions should reflect the righteousness outlined in the sermon as a whole that maintains the vertical and the horizontal relationship requirements as well as one's own needs.

9 See ch. II.B for comments on the Lord's Prayer and its literary context in Luke.
10 Guelich, Sermon, 325, calls it a "prayer didache."
11 So also Nolland, Luke, 2:628. Joachim Jeremias, The Parables of Jesus (London: SCM, 1972), 105, 158, 159–60, has suggested that the Friend at Midnight not be too closely tied to the following prayer material for its own interpretation. There may be merit in this, but parables must have had some original context and prayer seems to be the best one for these parables, as Jeremias' own comments state (159–160).
friendship, but because of ἀναίδεια that the sleeper grants the request of the host. This word usually means, "shamelessness, impertinence, impudence, or ignoring of convention," but uncertainty over the players in this final verse (does the second αὐτοῦ in v. 8 refer to the sleeper or the host?) has given rise to doubt over its meaning. Four main interpretations have been offered: (1) that the sleeper acts because of his own shame, which he wishes to avoid. However, ἀναίδεια does not mean avoidance of shame but shamelessness, implying disregard of cultural norms, and there is no good reason to suggest that the first αὐτοῦ and the second have different referents. (2) That the sleeper acts because of his own shamelessness, that is, he is taking advantage of the need of the friend at the door (through reciprocity arrangements within the culture) to be used at a later time. This view again requires that the second use of the possessive pronoun αὐτοῦ refers to the sleeper. (3) That the sleeper grants the host's requests because of the host's persistence. Unfortunately, although this translation is common, the word ἀναίδεια nowhere else bears the idea of persistence. The translation probably arises from reading the story in the light of the parable of the Widow and the Judge in Luke 18:1–8.

12 BDAG, 63, ἀναίδεια. See the entry for discussion of alternatives and a history of research of the word.
16 Fitzmyer, Luke, 2:912. If it were to refer to the "sleeper," one would have expected greater clarity (e.g., using ἐσωτεροῦ).
18 Fitzmyer, Luke, 2:912. He qualifies it in the following way: "his importunity in begging and begging at this late hour of the night." This is very close to the fourth and preferable view of the word's meaning.
19 For example, NRSV.
20 There are similarities between the two parables, which share a parallel expression (in 11:7; 18:5, παρεχεῖν + κοπός). In that parable, persistence is emphasized.
That the sleeper acts because of the host's shamelessness. This interpretation is the most likely, but the rarity of the word ἀνακέντασθαι leaves any interpreter cautious. The sleeper is moved from a position of excuses and possible refusal to abundant giving (δόσων χρημάτων). The parable does not focus on the host but the sleeper, as the following unit (11:9–13) indicates, by using an argument of contrast ("lesser to the greater" [a minore ad maius]) between God and the sleeper. Unlike the sleeper, God does not need rousing or having his attitude changed, but—as Luke 11:9–13 will now reinforce—is only too willing to give to his children when he is asked. Hultgren captures the essence of it: "God is portrayed here in a rather ordinary way [...] as someone who is awakened and bothered by someone at the door [...] the children of God should approach God without reservations."

The inference of the Parable of the Friend at Midnight is that the prayer promise to follow (11:9–13) is made by Jesus on behalf of a God who is willing to answer requests when they are made of him. This message reinforces the picture of God gained in the examination of the Lord's Prayer, especially in its address and through various time signals: (1) the widow "used to come" (ἦρχετο, iterative imperfect); (2) the judge "did not want to [do what was requested] for a time" (καὶ οὐκ ἦθελεν ἐπὶ χρόνον); (3) yet "after these things" (μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα) acceded; and, (4) the reason the judge gives for changing his mind is "so that [the widow] might not in the end give me a black eye! (i.e., a blackened reputation; ἵνα μὴ ἔλθῃ τέλος ἐρχομένη ὑπωπτικής με; so BDAG, 1043, ὑπωπτικής, 2). The metaphorical sense of this phrase is not well-attested. Joel B. Green, The Gospel of Luke (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich./Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 1997), 641, says it may be that the judge is concerned that the woman will actually hit him, which will lead to the same result. See also Fitzmyer, Luke, 2:1179; Nolland, Luke, 2:868. Crump, Petitionary Prayer, 77–89, makes the point that persistence and not repetition is being commended here.

Hultgren, Parables, 233: "If a person is at the door, and he or she makes a reasonable request (one that can be met), the response is to take care of the matter, it may be annoying to have to do so, but it will be done."

A hint that supports this view is found in the way the sleeper's response is depicted—as if he will do anything to get rid of his friend (he gives him as much as he wants, δόσων χρημάτων). Fleddermann, "Three Friends," 277–281, gives an interpretation based on analogies with other parables in Luke and concludes the parable is about forcing "others to respond to human needs even when it involves violating social norms" (281).

The same rhetorical tool is found in the related Parable of the Unjust Judge (18:1–8), and in the two similitudes found in the prayer promise of 11:9–13. See James D. G. Dunn, "Prayer," DJG: 625; Jeremias, Parables, 153–160, for details.

Hultgren, Parables, 233. There may be a faint echo of the taunt of Elijah to the prophets of Baal when he accuses their God of being asleep and needing to be woken (1 Kgs 18:27; cf. Matt 6:5–6).
"we-petitions." One may be confident in approaching God with petitions and concerns; he is more willing to provide than petitioners to ask. The context of the unconditional prayer promise in Luke fits hand-in-glove with the preceding parable, while the immediate context of Matthean version is more difficult to fathom.

2. Exegesis

As noted above, this prayer promise consists of two parts, an exhortation to pray together with a promise of answer (Matt 7:7 par. Luke 11:9) that is based upon the fact that everyone who asks will be answered (by God; Matt 7:8 par. Luke 11:10), and two parallel similitudes (Matt 7:9, 10 par. Luke 11:11, 12) that provide the basis for a conclusion about the boundless nature of God's goodness (Matt 7:11 par. Luke 11:13). The two sections of the unit are held together by a common theme of asking and giving/receiving, with specific vocabulary in Matthew 7:7, 11 and Luke 11:9, 13 forming a possible chiasm or at least a bracket for the unit. The unit uses repetition, surprise, illustrations, and logic in its rhetorical arsenal. The agreements between the Matthean and Lukan versions of the unit below are underlined.

25 Davies and Allison, Matthew, 678, 682; Hagner, Matthew, 1:173
26 A common observation, e.g., Guelich, Sermon, 321.
27 See Betz, Sermon, 501–503, for details of the rhetoric in the unit.
Matthew 7:7–11

9 Aijtei'te kai doqhvsetai υμιν,
ζητειτε και ευρησετε,
krouvete kai anoighsetai υμιν:
8 pacs graph' o aitw'n lambavnei
kai o zhtw'n euriskei
kai to krouonti anoighsetai.
9 h' tis estin e[e] υμων anbropos,
din aithsi28 o uidos autoplayz, 
mu lithon epidwseai autw;
10 h' kai i'khown aithsi,
mu dhin epidwseai autw;
11 ei o'sin umeis poenpoid ontes
oidate domata agaθa didonai
tois teknois υμων,
pasw melou̜n o patheρ υμων o en tois
oμανονδ


9 Κάγω υμιν λέγω,
αιτειται και δοθήσεται υμιν,
ζητειται και εὑρήσεται,
kρουεται και ἀνοιγήσεται υμίν:
10 πας γὰρ ὁ αἰτῶν λαμβάνει
καὶ ὁ ζητῶν εὑρίσκει
καὶ τὸ κρούοντι ἀνοιγήσεται.
11 τίνα29 δὲ ἐξ υμῶν τὸν πατέρα
αἰτήσει ὁ υἱὸς ἰχθῦν,30
καὶ ἀντὶ ἰχθύος δίνων αὐτῷ ἐπιδώσει;
12 ἦ καὶ αἰτήσει φῶν,
ἐπιδώσει αὐτῷ σκορπίων;
13 ἦ καὶ ὅμως ὑμεῖς πονηροὶ ὑπάρχοντες
οἴδατε δόματα ἁγαθά διδόναι
tois teknois umowon,
pasw malloon o patheρ [θ] eξ ouρanow31
dwseiz pneuma agion
tois aitouσin autow.

b. Exhortation and Promise (Matt 7:7, 8 par. Luke 11:9, 10)
The inner structure of the first part of this prayer promise is tightly controlled by the use of repetition. The threefold form in the command and promise do not point to three different kinds of seeking or praying, but to one thing: asking in prayer. The threefold imperative emphasizes urgency, and the threefold promise emphasizes certainty of response. While the command focuses on the petitioner, the promise focuses on the One petitioned.

Not all scholars are convinced that the exhortation and prayer promise is about prayer. Some consider that the three verbs (αἰτεῖν, ζητεῖν, κρούειν) refer to life in general. Nolland, for example, sees the first section as a "general call to venture and risk in life, with confidence that existence offers plenitude." Betz has suggested that the lack of object for these verbs allows the exhortations to be interpreted in a proverbial fashion. It is also argued that the three verbs are used in Jewish and

have included όμων after δ ἀντὶ (i.e., p[579]. 1424. [pc] l vg; with δ, C [f13 pc], are no doubt under the influence of Matt 7:11.

33 Minear, Commands of Christ, 113–114.
35 Luz, Matthew 1-7, 421.
36 Nolland, Luke, 2:629. He continues, "The three images are of asking for something that another may be able to provide; seeking for what has been lost, or whose location is initially unknown for some other reason; and knocking on a door to gain admission to a building." Again Nolland, Matthew, 325: "The three images offered here define an area that is larger and more general than prayer. […]They are all images of venturing out in pursuit of something, and in the context they become a set of mutually interpreting images of venturing with God." Betz, Sermon, 506–507, says the unit protests against scepticism among Christians: "The basic approach to life, therefore, should be that of the quester, the seeker, the knocker on doors." Betz, Sermon, 504–505, 506, may be over-reaching in using this openness to support his view of a non-prayer meaning of the three commands and their promises; e.g., "People can expect to find when they seek. Doors will open when one knocks. The message is that we do this all the time, and we are right in doing it. It may not
Greco-Roman writings in such a fashion. Closer investigation raises questions about this point. First, "asking" and "knocking" are not that widely used in either Jewish or Greco-Roman traditions of spirituality.38 “Seeking” is frequently referred to in Jewish writings,39 but many—if not most—of the occurrences imply praying to God (e.g., Isa 65:1, 2; comp. 1:15).40 The use of the three verbs to convey a similar meaning about prayer is rhetorical, but not symbolic of the whole of life.

Three things may be noted about this threefold invitation. Firstly, the "secret" of prayer lies not in the petitioner, but the One petitioned, as conveyed by the parable of the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5–8). All (μὴς) who hear Jesus' promises and instructions about the kingdom may make requests of God with certainty of being heard and answered.41 Secondly, although it may be argued that the present tense always happen, but surprisingly these things do happen most of the time." Georg Bertram, "κροῶ," TDNT 3: 955, has a similar view: "As finding follows seeking, or the opening of the door knocking, so giving follows asking. […] The word of the Saviour is designed to establish the sure expectation which we often have in earthly things as a foundation for man's dealings with God." Marshall, Luke, 467–468, analyses this construction here and concludes that it is not a proverb (or "beggar's wisdom") but an "apodictic assertion of the certainty of God's willingness to respond." It is, as Nolland, Luke, 2:630, says, a "prophetic promise" ("I say to you", καγῶν ὃν λέγο). For further argument against Betz' view, see also Anna Wierzbicka, What Did Jesus Mean? Explaining the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables in Simple and Universal Human Concepts (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 190–191.

38 Minear, Commands of Christ, 118–122, details the richness of the metaphor of knocking and doors/gates in the NT, and argues for an original eschatological emphasis on the saying which has been lost in Matthew (122). He assumes that the three sayings existed independently and then were gathered together here.

39 That is, to "seeking" God and finding or being found by him; e.g., Exod 33:7; Deut 4:29; Isa 55:6; 65:1; Jer 29:12–13; 1 QS 1:1–2; or seeking "Wisdom," Prov 1:28; 8:17; Ecclus 7:23–27; Wisd 6:12; cf. Gos. Thom. 2 [par. P.Oxy. 654.1 ], 24, 38, 76, 80, 92, 94. For Greco-Roman uses of "seeking" and "finding" see Betz, Sermon, 501–502. Philo Migr. 121 is the only close parallel to a prayer use of the construction "ask…it will be given" outside of the NT (cf. John 15:16; 16:23; Jas 1:5). It is in marked contrast to the present text in that it attributes the success of the intercessor to God's high regard for the "just man" (like Abraham, Migr. 122); cf. Minear, Commands of Christ, 122–125.

40 As Nolland, Luke, 2:629–630, goes on to indicate, the verbs may have other uses but here it is controlled by the prayer context.

41 The repetition of ὃν in the first and third command hits the hearers as well. The positive disposition of the unit is to be contrasted with the critical tone of the rest of the instructions in the body of the Sermon on the Mount; so Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:679–680; Guelich, Sermon, 357.
imperatives imply success through repetition (or persistence) in prayer,42 the present imperative is a general or open-ended request, often used in paraenesis.43 The implication is an anytime–anywhere invitation to petition the Father and reflects an open attitude by the petitioner to God as Father. This would certainly fit with the Lukan context of the Parable of the Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5–8), which stressed God's giving nature rather than repetition.44 Thirdly, the promise in the second verse of the unit is in the present tense (Matt 7:8 par. Luke 11:10, λαμβάνει, εὑρίσκει45). This has the effect of placing the realisation of the requests into the here and now, and not as a future eschatological benefit.46 The future tenses in the previous verse (Matt 7:7 par. Luke 11:9) refer to expected or certain outcomes rather than to precise timing.47

The unconditional prayer promises of Matthew 7:7–8 and Luke 11:9–10 are unique in the Synoptic Gospels and within their period.48 As the similitudes to follow imply (Matt 7:9–11 par. Luke 11:11–13), prayer is a privilege of kinship and being heard is thereby guaranteed (cf. Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6; compare John 11:41b–42). Jesus presumes the petitioner is a "child" (or, "son," e.g., Matt 5:9, 44–45 par. Luke 42.


43 Campbell, "Verbal Aspect in the Non-Indicative," 117–123. Nolland, *Luke*, 2:629, is one commentator who deals with this correctly. The difficulty of using tense as an indicator of the action in an imperative is illustrated by the very close parallel to the present text found in Jas 1:5, εἰ δὲ τις ὑμῶν λείπεται σοφίας, αἰτεῖτω παρὰ τοῦ διὸντος θεοῦ πασίν ἄπλος καὶ μὴ ὅνειδίζοντος καὶ δοθῆσαι αὐτῷ ("If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God and he will give to him generously and without reproach"). The context dictates that this prayer is to be prayed in the case when one lacks wisdom and the expectation is that one does not need to do this over and over all the time. The aorist could easily have been used in James, but since it refers to an attitude of life the present is suitable. But a mistake is made if—in the prayer promises under examination—emphasis is put on the action of the petitioner as a contributing factor in the success of the venture. As Eduard Schweizer, *The Good News according to Matthew* (trans. David E. Green; Atlanta, Ga: John Knox Press, 1975), 173, notes, Jesus emphasizes—in an unguarded way—the generosity and responsiveness of God. It is this that gives certainty to the promise and not the action of the petitioner.


45 The future passive ἀνοιγῆσεται is not eschatological but is necessitated by the passive (and here divine) voice.


48 Luz, *Matthew 1-7*, 421, notes a "unique quality about these prayer promises," as well as some precursors (Jer 29:12–14; cf. Isa 49:15; Ps 50:15)
who calls upon the "Father" (Matt 6.6, 8, 9 par Luke 11:2; Matt 11:27 par. Luke 10:22). Successful petition is therefore not based upon repetition or other means of gaining access.

The warning issued by many scholars about the misuse of these prayer promises is misplaced. One wonders whether critics have grasped the relational nature of these promises. The promise is not aimed at whatever you ask, seek, knock for, but whoever asks, seeks, or knocks. It is not grounded on material gain, but on relational awareness. The status of being within the family of disciples is now transferred to prayer. Jesus' disciples have a Father who responds to their requests, regardless of their own level of confidence. This conclusion is easier to draw in Luke 11:9–13, where the preceding Parable of the Friend at Midnight (11:5–8) portrays the Father as one who is more than ready to get up and do what is asked without any excuses. His nature is expressed in the promise: "whoever asks, receives."

Two similitudes support the preceding prayer promise (Matt 7:7–8 par. Luke 11:9–10). The difference between the Matthean and Lukan versions of the similitudes is one of degree rather than of kind. They are delivered in a pair to ensure engagement of emotions. Listeners are arrested by the disjunctive beginning of the sub-section (Matt 7:9, ἕτε τίς ἐστιν ἡ ὁμών ἀνθρώπος; Luke 11:11, τίνα δὲ ἐξ ὁμών τὸν πατέρα), which forces them to consider whether they—in the role of fathers—could imagine the thing that is being suggested in the story; the answer is supposed to be No. The point of the similitudes is not about the kind of requests being made—which are obvious exaggerations—but about the character of the one who grants requests, namely, the hearer ("which man among you [ἐξ ὁμών, Matt and Luke]"). The similitudes, therefore, reinforce the relational aspect of the promises.

49 For discussion on how the illustrations chosen may emerge from the special interest of the respective evangelist see Minear, Commands of Christ, 117–118, though his Sitz im Leben is conjectural. Since the illustrations are of little value without the conclusion (Matt 7:11 par. Luke 11:13), and the conclusion follows the same pattern and basis of comparison in both Matthew and Luke (πόσον μάλλον), then the cause of the differences in the similitudes is not vital for their interpretation.

50 The μὴ in Matthew 7:9, 10 ensures the "right" conclusion.

51 Note that the verb "to give" has been repeated (albeit with the preposition ἐπί). According to according to Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:681, this verb is
The similitudes go to the motives of the parent, which are assumed to be innately good.

The conclusion to the unit (Matthew 7:11 par. Luke 11:13) pulls the threads of the unit together by using a by-how-much-more comparison (πόσῳ μᾶλλον; qal wachomer; a minori ad maius), for which the similitudes are preparation. For Hultgren, this saying "marks a switch from an appeal to experience to an appeal to reason." Yet experience must continue to be a factor in the conclusion. Having raised the listeners' paternal pride in doing the "good," the parable teller now destabilises this by asserting a sober truth about the listeners (note, the emphatic όμετέρον): they are all in a condition of being "evil" (Matt, πονηροὶ ὁντες; Luke, πονηροὶ ὑπάρχοντες).

The Father who answers prayer is immeasurably greater in goodness (he only gives "good" things) and openness to give. It is of the nature of disciples that they "ask" and it is of the nature of their Father that he "gives."

Although Matthew and Luke use the same basis for their conclusion (δόματα ἄγια), Matthew's version says that God gives "good things" (ἄγια) and Luke's that he gives the "Holy Spirit" (πνεῦμα ἅγιον).

"directive." BDAG, 370, ἔπιτίδῆμοι, renders it "hand over" as well as "give," and perhaps thereby implying a more intimate sense.


There is not an intention here to introduce the fallenness of all humanity as a theological topic, but it is assumed as an experiential given. The main point here, though, is that the hearers are merely a sample of the human race (τίς ἐστιν ἐκ οὕτων ὁμοίων ἄνθρωπος, Matt 7:9 par. Luke 11:11). See Fitzmyer, Luke, 2:915; Nolland, Luke, 2:631, for further discussion. Davies and Allison, Matthew, 1:683, say that the introduction about human parents is not necessary to the argument, but incidental. It is rhetorical, but it is required in order to drive home the point about the greatness of the heavenly Father's goodness and willingness to give what is good. The question of Jesus' sinlessness may be on the agenda (cf. 2 Cor 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26–28; 1 Pet 1:19; 1 John 2:1; 3:3–5), but it adds nothing to this particular text. As noted in the section the address of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus carefully distinguishes his speech about "my father" and "your (or the) Father" (II.C.3.b). Within Matthew πονηροὶ occurs some 26 times and here presupposes moral degradation that is common to all; so Hagner, Matthew, 2:174.

parallel with the "good things" theme of the similitudes (vv. 9–10; cf. Sir 18:17), which should not be limited to material benefits. Guelich suggests that the ἄγαθά summarises the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, which express "[t]he present and future dimensions of the kingdom and life lived commensurate with the kingdom."\(^{55}\) Hagner is more specific: "[t]he 'good things' certainly cover the ongoing needs of the disciples [cf. 6:25–34] but in the larger context of the Gospel, they suggest also the blessings of the kingdom."\(^{56}\)

Luke 11:13 names the Holy Spirit (πνεῦμα Ἁγίου) as the divine benefit to petitioners. This difference from Matthew is seen by many as a movement away from material benefits and more in tune with Luke's theology, perhaps forming a preparation for the pouring out of the Spirit in the Book of Acts (2:33; note also 2:38; 8:17; 10:45; 11:17).\(^{57}\) Tannehill expresses the argument thus:

\begin{quote}
At the proper time, the disciples will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit by asking the Father for it, that is by asking God in prayer. Acts 1:14, 2:1–4, 4:23–31, 8:14–17, and 9:11–17 indicate that the Spirit comes to the believers following prayer.\(^{58}\)
\end{quote}

Furthermore, a well-supported variant in Luke 11:13, which states that the Spirit is given by the Father "from heaven" (ἐξ οὐρανοῦ), also adds weight to the view that Pentecost is referred to here. Other factors, however, argue against this view. First, the "gift" of the Spirit in Luke-Acts does not come "from heaven."\(^{59}\) Second, the

\(^{55}\) Guelich, Sermon, 259; so also Schweizer, The Good News according to Matthew, 173, 174.

\(^{56}\) Hagner, Matthew, 175. In Matthew the word ἄγαθό is found again only in 12:34, 35. Just as a bad tree bears bad fruit, it is impossible, says Jesus, for the Pharisees to speak "good things" (ἄγαθό) because they are "evil" (πονηροί). The present passage appears to be working on a different level.


\(^{59}\) The gift of the Spirit is "poured out (upon)" (Acts 10:45; cf. 2:33), "comes upon," (19:6), or is "given" to or "received" by believers (Acts 2:38; 11:17; cf. Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6).
Spirit is not a gift one asks for oneself (a clear implication of Luke 11:13, "ask and it will be given to you"). The prayer in Acts 4:23–31 is not for the Spirit; the Spirit is given in answer to their prayer about other things (like Luke 11:13). Third, the texts that Tannehill cites as evidence of an outpouring of the Spirit preceded by prayer (e.g., Acts 1:14, 2:1–4, 4:23–31) are not general circumstances (as portrayed in Luke 11:9–13), but specific one-off events. The promise of Jesus in Luke 11:13, therefore, does not refer to the initial donation of the Spirit, but to the ongoing supply of the Spirit for the petitioner (cf. Phil 1:19).

Luke-Acts regularly displays the cluster of prayer, the Holy Spirit, and/or the kingdom of God (e.g., Luke 1:30–35, 46–55; 3:21–22; 9:28–36; 11:2 [Marcion], 13; 24:44–51; Acts 1:24–26; 2:1–4; 4:24–31; 6:3–6; 8:15–17). That this cluster is present here is apparent when the prayer promise in Luke 11:13 is compared with the promise of Jesus in Luke 12:32: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The Spirit is the agent of the kingdom of God realising the salvation plan of God in the here and now. If the intention of Luke 11:13 is to tie petition to the kingdom of God (via the Spirit), then Jesus is promising that the Father will, by supplying his Spirit in answer to their prayers for everyday

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60 The apostles in Acts pray that the Spirit (as a "gift," δωρεά) would come upon others (Acts 8:14–17; cf. 9:11–17), but not upon themselves.
61 Crump, Jesus the Intercessor, 133–134, has argued that at this point in Luke αἰτεῖν does not mean "to ask for" particular objects, but "to pray" ("the heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who pray"). "The word αἰτέω serves not only as a catchword, providing a verbal link between the various pieces of tradition brought together by Luke in 11:1–13, but in so functioning it acquires the connotations of the verb προσεύχομαι itself." Drawing such fine distinctions between these two verbs does not negate the contextual meaning of the prayer saying, which presumes requests being made with the expectation of an answer rather than "prayer" taking place; i.e., αἰτεῖν must mean more than "pray" in vv. 9–10.
matters, forward his purposes. Of course, if it is the Holy Spirit who is provided then prayers should aim at those things that enhance the forward movement of the kingdom (e.g., Acts 4:23–31; cf. Eph 4:1–16), but not in an exclusively spiritualising way. A lack of daily bread can stall God's work just as much as direct Satanic attack. The suggestion of the final line in both versions of the prayer promise is that petitioners will be given much more than they ask for and will see their prayers integrated into the extension of God's kingdom (Matt 6:33; cf. Rom 8:32; Phil 4:6–7, 19). Here, again, the prayer promise chimes in well with the Lord's Prayer petitions.

3. Conclusion
The prayer promise found in Matthew 7:7–11 and Luke 11:9–13 has at its heart an invitation to petition the Father who is, for his part, willing and able to provide far more than petitioners can ask. The aim of the unit is not to focus on the content of the petition, but the character of the Giver. God's disposition is to respond here and now to requests made of him, just as a father would want to give his son here and now what is asked of him. It is God's desire to give his children every good thing, that is, all that the kingdom contains (Luke 12:32). This promise is open-ended and unconditional.

As noted in Chapter I, it is frequently stated or implied that the unconditional nature of this prayer-promise unit should not be taken to mean God will provide for

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65 A brief examination of ἀγαθός shows that Luke's use of the word is more theologically nuanced than Matthew's and may explain Luke's substitution the "Holy Spirit" for it. "Good things" is used once in Luke to refer to eschatological blessings promised to the forefathers (Luke 1:53; cf. 6:21, 25), and on three occasions to material benefits or "goods" which, though useful, can distract one from the priorities of the kingdom of God (Luke 12:18, 19; cf. 16:25). According to the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:5–8, 11–15) the believer's focus should be upon being "good soil" in which in the Word (i.e., "good news") bears a plenteous harvest (cf. 8:8, 15). There is a push in Luke to dependence upon the heavenly Father who desires to "give [the disciples] the kingdom" (cf. Luke 12:22–34, v. 32 quoted). "Good things" may be too tame to communicate what is needed in Luke.


68 von Campenhausen, "Gebetshörung," 160–161; "[E]s ist die unerschütterliche, 'väterliche' güte Gottes, die jeden Zweifel und der Wirklichkeit der Gebetserhörung von vornherein unmöglich macht und ausschliesst."
every whim, as if protection from a magic lamp mentality was needed. This view is sometimes argued for on the basis that the invitations are in the present tense, implying repetition until success is granted. In the exegesis above, such concerns were not only found to be linguistically wanting, but also to run against the whole direction of the passage, which is attempting to drive away the idea of God as a stingy provider needing to be cajoled or browbeaten into giving what is requested (cf. Matt 6:7–8; Luke 11:5–8). The Father's generosity is always open to abuse, but it is not up to others to protect him from the self-centred and avaricious (e.g., Luke 12:12–20; 17:11–19). Furthermore, the passage is more than alert to the limitations of human self-centredness ("if you, being evil...") and therefore to the potential for abusing a privilege: God does not need a minder.

Any resolution of the relationship between promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer must adopt the unconditional prayer promises as they are and not in the usual qualified fashion. The promises express the reality of what lies behind the Lord's Prayer: the Father is willing and generous and desires to give his children their most basic requirements. Yet in providing the basic necessities of life, God is forwarding his (kingdom) purposes by his Spirit. This exhortation to pray—and its basis in God's character—unveils something of Jesus' own understanding and experience of prayer (see esp., Matt 11:25 par. Luke 10:21).

For example, Hultgren, Parables, 238. Less harsh is Nolland, Luke, 2:632, "In the practical outworking of this teaching its application will need to be balanced by other biblical teaching, but here as a basic principle the logic of the Fatherhood of God is presented to us in stark simplicity."
1. Introduction to the Prayer Promises of Mark

There are two kinds of prayer promises found in the Synoptic Gospels, conditional and unconditional. The previous section treated the unconditional prayer promise, found in Matthew 7:7–11 and Luke 11:9–13. The present section and the next will examine two conditional prayer promises that follow two miracles (Mark 9:29; 11:24 par. Matt 21:22). The focus of both sections will be upon Mark's version of these promises and not a comparison of all three Synoptic versions. The other Synoptic Gospels blunt the angularity of the Markan accounts or exclude the prayer promise altogether. Furthermore, the two Markan promises (and their contexts) are thematically related, with the first story providing a foundation for the second to build upon. The episodes are deeply embedded in Markan kingdom theology.

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72 Mark 9:14–29 and 11:12–14; 20–24 are both: miracles (an exorcism and a "nature" miracle), focus on the faith of those participating/listening (9:23–24, 28–29(?); 11:22–24), contrast what is possible for God and impossible for humans (9:18, 21–24, 28–29; 11:22–24), highlight prayer as a means of availing oneself of God's power (9:29; 11:24), and contain private teaching sessions directed to the disciples on prayer (9:28–29; 11:22–25). It may also be noted that both stories come early in
through the use of "faith" and "power" (1:14–15). In Mark's Gospel, Jesus—as the herald of the good news of salvation—is positioned as the agent of the kingdom of God and its power. Jesus' healing and exorcising ministry in the first half of the gospel is marked by the astonishment of the supplicants and others (e.g., 1:27; 2:12; 3:11; 4:41; 5:33; 6:51–52) and their varying responses of faith (or lack thereof, 2:5; 4:40; 5:34, 36). The power unveiled in Jesus' miraculous ministry is God's eschatological saving power whose results are not limited to physical healings. The healings (and exorcisms) are frequently highlighted as signs of an eternal rescue from judgement; one must be forgiven as well as healed (e.g., Mark 2:1–12). Within the central section of Mark (8:22/27–10:45/52)—between the two prayer promises—the focus is on the omnipotent salvation power of God (10:26, 27) and servant-like and obedient faith (9:33–37, 41, 42–49; 10:13–16, 38–45). Prayer is woven into this matrix at Mark 9:29 and 11:22–25.

2. Literary Context, Structure, and Themes of Mark 9:14–29
The exorcism of Mark 9:14–27 takes place at the start of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. From the confession of Jesus as "the Christ" in Mark 8:29 to his arrival in Jerusalem, Jesus' focus is on teaching the disciples what it means for him to be the Christ (8:29, 31; 9:31; 10:33–34, 45) and what it means for them to be his followers (8:34–38; 9:33–10:45; i.e., on the "way," 8:27; 9:33, 34; 10:17, 32, 46, 52).
exorcism is the only one performed in these chapters, and, according to one scholar contains "at least one element of each of the previous healing/exorcism episodes before Bethsaida."\(^7\) Therefore the exorcism of the boy carries the themes of healing or exorcising salvation (i.e., God's kingdom power), faith, and the agency of Jesus.

The Matthean and Lukan versions of the episode pare it down considerably, not an uncommon trait given Mark's detailed depictions of miracles and exorcisms. Luke and Matthew focus on the disciples' inability and contrast it with Jesus' ability, pointing to their "little faith" as the reason for their failure. Mark, on the other hand, provides details of the boy's condition, exorcism, and particularly the conversations between the boy's father and Jesus as well as that between Jesus and the disciples about prayer in verse 29.\(^7\)

There are three parts to the story: (1) the disciples' failure to perform the exorcism as requested (vv. 14–19); (2) Jesus' conversation with the boy's father on the need for faith, followed by the exorcism (vv. 20–27); and, (3) Jesus' answer to the disciples' question about their inability to perform the exorcism (vv. 28–29).\(^8\) All three sections are integrated around the idea of who has the ability or power to perform this task. The main focus of the present examination of this unit is the final section about prayer, but there are key themes introduced in the first two sections that contribute to the prayer section and to Mark's view of petitionary prayer.

The first thing worthy of note is the way Mark describes the reaction of the crowd to Jesus' arrival with Peter, James, and John by the word ἑξηκομηθοῦσαν (v. 15, translated "overcome with awe" [NRSV] or "overwhelmed with wonder" [NIV];

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\(^7\) Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1988), 254.


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e.g., 14:33; 16:5, 6). Mark is the only New Testament book in which the root θαμβείσθαι is found (1:27; 10:24, 32). This way of depicting the crowd's reaction is intriguing because it usually refers to post-miracle astonishment, but here the astonishment occurs before the exorcism.\textsuperscript{81} One reason suggested for the reaction is that Jesus' transfiguration "glow" had not yet left him and the crowds fell back in amazement when they saw him.\textsuperscript{82} The verb also means "to be (very) excited," and this may be a more suitable rendering here.\textsuperscript{83} That is, the crowd, in light of the failure of the disciples to perform a miracle, are ready for the grand finale. The scene is set for a misunderstanding of Jesus' healing/exorcising powers.

A second unusual element in the narrative is the use of the verb ἴσχυειν\textsuperscript{84} to refer to the disciples' power to exorcise in verse 18 rather than the regular word for "be able" used throughout the story (δύνασθαι or its cognates in vv. 23, 24, 28 and 29). The verb ἴσχυειν and pronominal forms from the ἴσχυρο- stem occur at key points in Mark, most notably the substantive ὁ ἴσχυρότερος ("the stronger one") in

\textsuperscript{81} For example, Mark 1:27; 2:12; 5:42; 6:51, etc.; cf. Theissen, Miracle Stories, 69–72.

\textsuperscript{82} Robert H. Gundry, Mark: A Commentary on His Apology for the Cross (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1993), 487–488, argues that the perfective ἐξ- in ἐξεθαμβηθησόσαν points to emotional distress and even "psychological bewilderment." This is unlikely, not only because there is no hint of it in the text, but also because there have been two intervening scenes (vv. 9–10, 11–13) since the transfiguration account (vv. 2–8). There is no supramundane appearance of Jesus here but a crowd who are awed with Jesus' reputation. For the theme of "wonder" in Mark, see T. Dwyer, The Motif of Wonder in the Gospel of Mark (JSNTSup 128; Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996).

\textsuperscript{83} BDAG, 303, ἐξθαμβάω. R. Pesch, Das Markus Evangelium (HTKNT 2; 2 vols.; Freiburg: Herder, 1984), 2:85, renders ἐξεθαμβηθησόσαν by "shudder"; his explanation (87) indicates agreement with "excited" as a meaning. See also John Paul Heil, The Gospel of Mark as a Model for Action: A Reader Response Commentary (New York/Mawah, N.J.: Paulist, 1992), 191, who translates the word "greatly excited." It is possible that "excitement" is a theme since in 9:10 three disciples are descending from witnessing the transfiguration excitedly discussing what it would mean to rise from the dead; see Peter G. Bolt, The Cross from a Distance: The Atonement in Mark (Leicester, UK: IVP, 2004), 60–62; Francis J. Moloney, The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002), 183.

Mark 1:7 on the lips of John the Baptist. It is found again in Mark 3:27 (ἄλλ᾽ οὖν δύναται οὐδεὶς εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν τοῦ ἱσχυροῦ εἰσελθῶν) as a reference to Satan with a clear echo of the earlier occurrence at the start of the gospel. From this survey, a Christological tinge can be read into the Markan use of the verb ἵσχυειν, with the imminent defeat of the demonic world as the main target. The father’s comment in 9:18 that the disciples were not "strong enough" (οὐκ ἵσχυεσαι) is an editorial signal—similar to that found in another programmatic exorcism (the episode of Legion, 5:4, καὶ οὐδεὶς ἵσχυν οὐτὸν δαμάσαι)—that Jesus continues the battle that was forecast of him in the beginning (1:7), and which will continue with him unto the end (14:33–41). The disciples lacked Jesus’ strength (9:18) even though they had been commissioned under Jesus’ authority in 3:15 and again in 6:7 to perform exorcisms (successfully, cf. 6:12–13). As the conclusion of the story seems to indicate (vv. 28–29), the disciples are the most likely object of Jesus’ despair in verse 19 (an "unbelieving generation"), although the father, the crowd,

85 France, Mark, 70, says that only readers know that the "stronger one" is a human being waiting in the wings and that the arrival of Jesus in v. 9 would have been something of a shock to John and his hearers who would have envisaged God as the mystery identity. Gundry, Mark, 49, correctly notes that the comparative form of the adjective would most likely have conveyed another human being, even though the specific identity of that person was, most likely, not known to John.

86 France, Mark, 169: "The ultimate significance of the exorcisms is christological." Though dated, the comment of Grundmann, "ἵσχυς, κτλ," 401, is apt: "For this saying [Mark 3:27], which on close examination proves to be original, brings us face to face with Jesus' understanding of himself, with primitive Christology, which is quite grounded in the fact that Jesus is the ἵσχυρότερος who has overcome the ἵσχυρός and robbed him of his prey." The verb ἵσχυειν is again found in 14:37 when Jesus returns from praying and finds the disciples asleep and rhetorically asks Peter, Σίμων, καθεύδεις; οὐκ ἵσχυσας μίαν ώραν γρηγορήσαι; ("Simon, are you sleeping? Are you not strong enough to watch for one hour?"). Its context is dictated by the earlier request of Jesus, μείνατε οὖν καὶ γρηγορεῖτε (v. 34, "remain here and watch").

87 C. E. B. Cranfield, The Gospel according to Saint Mark (CGTC; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 300–301; Crump, Petitionary Prayer, 46–48. France, Mark, 365, suggests that the disciples typify the "wider human condition, as Jesus […] encountered it" who are "unwilling to take God at his word" and limit God to "merely human possibilities." Matthean commentators on the unit agree, e.g., Davies and Allison, Matthew, 2:724; Nolland, Matthew, 712, though again in a representative capacity. Gundry, Mark, 487–489, 494–497, however, argues that in v. 16 the crowd (being led by the scribes) is being asked why they are disputing with the disciples. According to him, it is this expanded crowd (including the father, v. 23, "my unbelief") and not the disciples who are being admonished in v. 19. The disciples, he says, "stand opposite the crowd in the foregoing dispute and Jesus will
and the scribes are not completely innocent of the charge. They too must see this exorcism as an object lesson in faith, God's power revealed in Jesus' ministry, and now prayer.\(^{88}\)

The third, and most significant, point in the preparation for the prayer promise is the conversation between the father and Jesus, which introduces the key themes of faith and power. Central to the conversation is the father's request, which is conditioned by the clause "if you can [do] anything" (εἴ τι δόνη, v. 22). The father's "if" undermines the possibility of a miracle from God and perhaps God's desire as well.\(^{89}\) Jesus' reply in verse 23 quotes the father (τὸ εἰ δόνη; "If you are able") and then states the opposite: "all things are possible for the one who believes" (πάντα δυνατὰ τῷ πιστεύοντι).\(^{90}\) The promise that "all things [are] possible"...
(πάντα δυνατά) occurs twice more in Mark (10:27; 14:36; cf. 13:22), but in both cases it is *God* for whom all things are possible (i.e., he is omnipotent). The only conclusion one can come to on these common promises is that the believer accesses the power of God. This is an extension of the programmatic announcement of Mark 1:14–15: God's salvation power is available for the one who believes in the good news of Jesus (cf. 1:1). But who is the "believer" referred to in Jesus' promise of Mark 9:23?

The identity of the "believer" in Mark 9:23 is left tantalisingly open. If the assumed "you" in εἰ δύνη ("if you are able") refers to Jesus then it is likely that Jesus is the "believer" in the second half of the sentence. Crump has recently supported this view, suggesting that the faith of the father is of no consequence in the

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91 Robert M. Grant, *Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought* (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1952), 127, has shown that the idea of omnipotence ("all things are possible"), expressed in the miraculous, was already known in Greco-Roman religion and thought, though understood in quite varied ways. Harold A. Remus, "Miracles (New Testament)," *ABD* 4: 856–869, has qualified this research to note that the uniqueness of the NT miracles was in their attribution to the *one* God of the Jewish tradition and/or his agents (including Jesus and the apostles). Dowd, *Prayer*, 78–92, adds to Grant's earlier research, noting the way omnipotence was handled in a number of Hellenistic philosophy schools and Second Temple Jewish writings. Of particular interest is the interpretation in the LXX of key passages such as Gen 18:14: Isa 42:2; and esp. Job 10:13.

92 Jeremias, *New Testament Theology*, 166. So also Achtemeier, "Miracles," 480; Heil, *Mark as a Model*, 194; Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark* (NTC 2; London, U.K./Peabody, Mass.: A. & C. Black/Hendrickson, 1991), 224; E. Lohmeyer, *Das Evangelium des Markus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1959), 190; Dieter Lührmann, "Faith: New Testament," *ABD* 2: 753; and, Marshall, *Faith*, 118–120. A recent detailed defence of this position is also found in Ian G. Wallis, *The Faith of Jesus Christ in Early Christian Traditions* (SNTSMS 84; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 27–36, who concludes: "[T]he disciples would have successfully performed the exorcism if they had demonstrated the kind of faith exhibited by Jesus," and, "the determinative factor for this healing is more likely to be associated with the healer than with the suppliant or patient.[…T]he successful deliverance of the boy results from Jesus' replacing his disciples as exorcist and not from any discernible change in the disposition of the father or anyone else for that matter" (30).
story; indeed, he says, the father remains cynical about the whole exercise.93 This seems too harsh.94 The father's cry of help sends mixed messages, to be sure, but, in the end, it would seem to place him as a believer, or would-be believer ("I believe! Help my unbelief!"); πιστεύω, βοήθει μου την ἀπίστευσθα. Jesus does not place the whole weight of the boy's successful restoration on the father's shoulders (though this is how he appears to understand it), but seeks to elicit (or refocus) faith, as he does elsewhere in the Markan narrative (5:36; 9:23-24; 10:52; 11:22; cf. 7:29).95 The most likely probability is that suggested by Jeremias, that the evangelist intends a double meaning in verse 23, both to Jesus' and to the father's faith.96 Although Mark nowhere states that Jesus "believes in God," he does present him as an obedient servant of God (Mark 8:31; 9:12, 31; 10:33–34, 45; 14:36).

Related to this, and of potentially greater interest to the present investigation, is how Mark (and the Synoptic Gospels generally) characterise suppliants pleading with Jesus to act for them. This—alongside his call to faith—brings the focus onto Jesus, which appears to be his intention in 9:14–29 and elsewhere (e.g., 5:30–34). Jesus is presented as the herald of the good news (1:14–15, 35) who is God's agent to rein in the opponent of God's people, Satan. The object of the participle (τῷ πιστεύοντι) is not stated in Mark 9:23, but since Jesus is placed as the mediator of the divine promise, it is difficult to exclude him as the object of the father's faith.97

The literary and theological context of the prayer saying in Mark 9:29 begins with hints of Jesus' battle with his spiritual enemy, Satan, and his frustration with

93 Crump, Petitionary Prayer, 48–49.
94 Crump, Petitionary Prayer, 42–46, diminishes the role of supplicant's faith within Jesus' healing ministry. He says that faith has a "peripheral" role (50).
96 Jeremias, New Testament Theology, 166. Dowd, Prayer, 111, citing Pesch, Markus, 2:92, considers that the referent of τῷ πιστεύοντι is "deliberately ambiguous." Though she does not quote Jeremias, she concludes in a similar way: "Jesus has faith and he calls the father to have faith." Similarly: Pesch, Markus, 2:92–93: "[…] da vordringlich Jesu Macht (betont durch die Wiederholung von εἰ δόνη) angesprochen ist, ist auch eine Aussage über Jesus […] Glauben […] impliziert. Was Jesus dem Vater zumutet, ist selbst Grundlage seiner Zu-Mutung"; Marshall, Faith, 119, the father is used in the narrative to point to a "general maxim […] that limitless divine power is released through human faith. Whether it is the faith of those who seek miracles […] or of those who work miracles."
97 Is this, perhaps, faith like a "mustard seed" (Matt 17:20 par. Luke 17:6)?
those who should by now know that success in exorcisms requires more than human strength. The interchange between Jesus and the father of a demon-possessed boy shows the necessity of the twin prongs of God's (kingdom) power and faith in God, united in the ministry and agency of Jesus. The exorcism itself is a prefiguring of Jesus' resurrection, with the boy appearing as if dead afterwards and being "raised up" by Jesus (v. 27). Just as there are not two kinds of salvation (physical and spiritual) so there are not two kinds of faith (miracle and salvation). The conversion of the boy from being demon-possessed to "standing"—through being raised up by Jesus—occurred by the faith-empowered authority of Jesus and by the halting faith of the father in Jesus' promise, and hence in Jesus himself as mediator of God's power and blessing. The resurrection hint in Mark 9:27 points forward in the gospel story to the raised Christ, whose presence is at the heart of a good number of other petitionary prayer promises in the New Testament (e.g., Matt 18:19–20; John 14:13–14, etc.; 2 Cor 12:8–10; Jas 5:13–16). It is into this matrix of faith, power, Satanic opposition, and Jesus' mediation that prayer is introduced in the final part of the unit.

98 The relationship of "faith" and "salvation" (which equates to the "kingdom of God," cf. 10:23, 24, 25, 26) cannot be separated out into different kinds of "faith" and "salvation," one for healing and another for eternal rescue from judgement. Contra Dowd, Prayer, 113: "It should be noted that at this point we are still talking about praying faith, or the faith which expects the impossible from God. We are not dealing with a concept of a faith which is constitutive of Christian existence. This tends to be forgotten when 9:14–29 is appealed to in support of a theology of grace. There is grace in this passage, but it is the grace that gives a miraculous healing to one who confesses that he is not able to believe and has the humility to ask for the miracle anyway" (referring to Lang, "Solia Gratia," 328, 335–337). Dowd is building on a distinction between faith that has responded to the *kerygma* (e.g., 1:15; 9:42) and faith that "means confidence in the power of God to do the impossible on behalf of the community." Maureen W. Yeung, *Faith in Jesus and Paul: A Comparison with Special Reference to "Faith that Can Remove Mountains" and "Your Faith Has Healed/Saved You"* (WUNT 2/147; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 2002), 193–195, has sufficiently dealt with this dubious distinction.
3. Exegesis (Mark 9:28–29)

The story to this point has established an interrelationship between faith, God's kingdom power, and Jesus as God's agent against Satan's rule. This relationship is found on several occasions in the first part of Mark's Gospel (e.g., Mark 5). The new element in this story is the answer the disciples are given when they ask Jesus why they were not able to cast out the demon (v. 28). Earlier, Jesus had expressed frustration with the disciples, declaring that they still belonged to the "faithless generation" (v. 19). Now he gives them a reason for their failure: "This kind only able to be cast out by prayer" (v. 29, τούτο τὸ γένος ἐν οὖν δύναται ἐξελθεῖν εἰ μὴ ἐν προσευχῇ). The issue of "ability" (δύνα- stem; "strength" or

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99 At least since the form-critical study of Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, 211, the final section of the pericope (Mark 9:28–29) has been regarded as an editorial addition, possibly a replacement resulting from the excising of the conclusion of one of the two posited sources for this episode; so also many others, e.g., Auvinen, *Prayer*, 161; Ernest Best, *Disciples and Discipleship: Studies in the Gospel according to Mark* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1986), 185–186; and, Pesch, *Markus*, 2:84–85. C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Gospel according to Saint Mark* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959), 299, objects to this view: "[I]t is intrinsically likely that the disciples would in the circumstances have asked this question at the earliest opportunity." Some attempts at composition-criticism in Mark have used these verses as evidence that the whole pericope was penned by "Mark"; e.g., Sellew, "Composition," 613, 625, 631–632. Many scholars posit a "community" to whom Mark is giving advice in vv. 28–29, an early Christian group heavily focussed on healing and exorcism; e.g., Gnilka, *Markus*, 2:49, "Das hier vorliegende Problem is auch nicht das des Markus, sondern das einer Gemeinde, die im Vollzug der eigenen exorzistischen Tätigkeit an ihre Grenze gestossen und ratlos geworden ist"; and, Ernest Best, *Following Jesus: Discipleship in the Gospel of Mark* (JSNTSup 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1981), 69, "The pericope is thus made to fit the post-Easter situation of believers; if they are to perform mighty deeds they must learn dependence on God through prayer."


101 The addition καὶ νηστεία is witnessed in βθγδθυ α ε λ ϑ Ψ χ l.2211 al co, but is absent from Ψ B 0274.2427 k. While the vast majority of manuscripts and versions have the variant (both here and in the par. Matt 17:21), its absence in Ψ B persuade most commentators that it is not original but that it emerged from early church ascetic practice; e.g., Cranfield, *Saint Mark*, 304–305; Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 280; Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 225; Taylor, *St Mark*, 401. The same variant occurs (in the reverse order) in some MSS of 1 Cor 7:5 and many of Acts 10:30. France, *Mark*, 361, has recently argued for the possible originality of καὶ νηστεία on the basis that it would be less likely for a scribe to include fasting in a context where, "the issue is not general devotion but exorcistic practice." However, Cranfield, *Saint Mark*, 305, is still probably correct in his
"power") returns once again into the narrative (cf. vv. 19, 22, 23; 10:27; 14:35, 36). Now, however, prayer is found in the place of faith as the means of accessing God's power available in Jesus. Many scholars, who accept the veracity of the prayer saying, see verse 29 as a "lesson" for the disciples who had become confident in their own ability and needed reminding of their dependence upon God. For others, the shift from faith to prayer is considered a Markan addition—reinforced in 11:22–25—in which a "message" is being given to his community. However, if verse 29 is a rebuke, it is a soft one, compared to that in verse 19.

What is most intriguing about Jesus' response in verse 29 is that it is expressed universally, that is, it does not exclude Jesus. Many are led to ask whether Jesus himself prayed for his miracles and exorcisms to take place. Sharyn Dowd has argued strongly that he did, citing the healing of the deaf mute (Mark 7:34) and the cursing of the fig tree (Mark 11:14), as well as Jesus' looking to heaven and blessing or giving thanks (6:41; 8:6) as examples of his miracle prayers. She concludes

judgement that, in addition to the weight of external evidence pointing to the exclusion of the variant, the scribes who included it had a "radical misunderstanding" of Jesus' point. So also Hooker, *Saint Mark*, 276.

Luke has omitted the question and answer at the conclusion of his version and finished with an acclamation by the crowd (Luke 9:43). Matthew has kept the disciples' question, but reinforced the need for the disciples to have faith ("because of your little faith," διὰ τὴν ὀλιγοπιστίαν ὑμῶν) with a saying from Mark's other prayer saying in 11:24 (Matt 17:21; cf. Mark 11:23; Matt 21:21; Luke 17:6).

Cranfield, *Saint Mark*, 305: "[The disciples] had to learn that God's power is not given to men in that way. It has rather to be asked for afresh (ἐν προσευχή) and received afresh. To trust in God's power in the sense that we imagine that we have it in our control and at our disposal is tantamount to unbelief; for it is really to trust in ourselves instead of in God." So also France, *Mark*, 370: "The disciple's problem […] has been a loss of the sense of dependence on Jesus' unique ἐξουσία which had undergirded their earlier exorcistic success. They have become blasé and thought of themselves as now the natural experts in such a case […]. Their public humiliation has been a necessary part of their re-education to the principles of the kingdom of God." Douglas R. A. Hare, *Mark* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 109: "Instead of imitating Jesus [who does not need to pray] the nine disciples ought to have humbly exhibited their dependence on God's power by resort to prayer."

For example, Gnulk, *Markus*, 49. Dowd, *Prayer*, 117, considers that Mark's purpose in including vv. 28–29 is to teach his community about power: "By connecting the miracle working with prayer and by presenting Jesus as a person of prayer the evangelist makes the point that the power of the community to heal and exorcise depends entirely on believing prayer."

that the evangelist intends Jesus to be a "model for his community." Other scholars—such as Ernest Best—are less convinced that Jesus is portrayed as praying for miracles and exorcisms: "[I]n Mark's Gospel, unlike Luke's, Jesus is not continually depicted as a man of prayer, and neither in the present passage nor anywhere else does he exorcise by prayer but by authority." For the latter scholars, Jesus' looking to heaven and blessing or thanking God for the bread before the feeding miracles need be seen as nothing more than regular Jewish gestures of prayer. However, must it be an either/or decision? Could not Jesus both model Jewish piety and pray for miracles to occur? Mark 7:34, as the clearest example of Jesus' praying during the performance of exorcisms and miracles, deserves further examination for it may provide insight into Jesus' mediation and hence into the question of successful petition.

Jesus' healing of the deaf mute in Mark 7:31–37 is pertinent to the prayer implications of the exorcism of the boy in 9:14–29. On that occasion Jesus not only looks to heaven, but he also "groans" (ἐστέναξαν, 7:34). Groaning could be the sound of his praying. The verb "to groan" (στέναξαν) usually implies an involuntary groaning in pain or longing. It may refer to Jesus' "deep emotional involvement," or show that, "the miracle worker suffers because of the barrier between human distress [...] and the realm of super-human salvation," but these explanations run the danger of overanalysing Jesus' psychology. The view that Jesus

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106 Dowd, Prayer, 120. "[M]iraculous power resides not in healers and exorcists but in God and therefore members of the community do not, strictly speaking, perform miracles, but they may pray for miracles: (121, emphasis original). So too Best, Following Jesus, 69, "The pericope is thus made to fit the post-Easter situation of believers; if they are to perform mighty deeds they must learn dependence on God through prayer." Not everyone agrees with the general conclusion about Jesus' praying for healings or exorcisms, e.g., Gundry, Mark, 99.

107 Best, Following Jesus, 69. The means by which Jesus heals is never fully revealed to readers of the Synoptic Gospels. What is consistently present is the "authoritative word of power" (e.g., exorcism: Mark 1:24; Matt 8:16; healing: Mark 1:41; 2:5, 11). Other gospel depictions of Jesus' healing indicate that "power" went out from him (Mark 5:30 par. Luke 8:48). But these occasions do not describe conscious means by which Jesus heals or exorcises.


109 Robert A. Guelich, Mark 1:1–8:26 (WBC 34A; Waco, Tex.: Word, 1989), 395.

110 BDAG, 942, στέναξαν.

111 France, Mark, 303–304.

112 Theissen, Miracle Stories, 57–58.
is struggling in prayer should be considered as a likely option for two reasons. Firstly, the participle ἀναβλέψας ("looking up [into heaven]") in 7:34 is dependent upon the verb ἔστεναξεν ("he groaned"). That is, Jesus' looking up is preparatory to his groaning, or perhaps an accompaniment to it (cf. 6:41; 8:6). These combined actions must imply prayer of some kind. Secondly, the noun form of the verb στενάξειν ("to groan") is found in a well-known Pauline prayer saying, Romans 8:26. Paul says there that, "the Spirit himself intercedes with sighs too deep for words (στεναγμοίς ἀλαλήτοις)." Here the Spirit emulates the creation and the Christian in their groaning, which is a longing for redemption to be completed (Rom 8:19, 23). 

"Groaning," therefore, is an appropriate response to or reflection of the struggle of the believer within the present age. Jesus' groaning in Mark 7:34 (and 8:12) and his frustration with the disciples, the crowd, and the religious rulers who also belong to "this faithless generation" (9:19) may be implied in the present story.

It cannot be concluded from these examples that Jesus performed these acts by prayer. However, it can be strongly suggested that such acts were performed with the assistance of prayer. Jesus' exorcisms are performed in a conflict with the demonic world (cf. Mark 1:23–26; 3:11–12, 22–27; 5:7–12)—one strong man versus another (1:7). Prayer may be seen as a preparatory or sustaining act in exorcisms and healings, but the exorcism itself is performed by an authoritative command. In the private, post-exorcism discussion, the disciples are instructed to enter Jesus' struggle with the kingdom of Satan through believing prayer and are assured of success in it.

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113 Jeffrey B. Gibson, "Another Look at Why Jesus 'Sighs Deeply': ἀναστενάξω in Mark 8:12a," *JTS* 47 (1996): 131–140, sees the verb in Mark 8:12a as that which tests Jesus' faithfulness to his mission, which would fit the argument put forward above.

114 See ch. IX below for details on Rom 8:26–27.

115 In the story of Mark, Jesus struggles against powers that blind eyes and harden hearts (cf. Mark 4:10–12; 6:52; 8:12, 17–18, 21, 22–26, 33; etc.). Jesus' radical compassion on the crowds and excluded individuals and communities is more than mere sympathy: the kingdom of God has broken into the present age and things will never be the same again (1:15). This leads to conflict, to a struggle for the kingdom, and this struggle is found within Jesus himself and he brought it before the Father in prayer, both in his "private" prayers and in his exorcisms and healings.


The introduction of prayer into the mix of faith, God's power, and Jesus' mediation, takes the story in a new direction. In spite of the views of many that prayer here is a Markan element,\footnote{The shift from faith to prayer is thought by most to be a Markan addition; e.g., Auvinen, \textit{Prayer}, 160–161. The argument of this paragraph goes some distance to rebutting this idea, but it must be admitted that there is no explicit evidence for Jesus' prayer within the present episode. Nevertheless, the argument relies upon three or four common elements being present: God's power, faith (and prayer), and Jesus as mediator. Throughout the Markan story God's power and faith are frequent companions; prayer is not as common. Yet in the climactic prayer of the gospel (Mark 14:32–42), prayer, power, and Jesus are found together, faith must be assumed as the origin of his prayer.} evidence was found elsewhere in Mark that Jesus prayed before miracles and exorcisms. The reasons for this are not completely clear, but there is sufficient evidence that Jesus' struggle with evil spirits and the Satanic realm, as well as with opposition and unbelief on the human plane, lay at the heart of his struggle in prayer. This struggle will be seen to be a feature of petitionary prayer elsewhere in the New Testament as a mark of the "already–not yet" eschatological tension in which believers live (see, ch. VIII.2, below). Prayer should not be seen in this episode as an additional or optional element, but as the expression of faith in the midst of strife. To such prayer the promise of success in exorcism is granted. In the same way that Jesus' struggle against opposition was endured through prayer, so the disciples must do the same. Entering into Jesus' struggle will reappear in quite different circumstances in the next chapter, which examines Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane.

4. Conclusion
The healing of the demon-possessed boy in Mark 9:14–29 is a climactic episode in the Markan narrative. In addition to the authoritative word of command and faith as a prerequisite of healing, the story introduces prayer as part of the process by which exorcisms take place. The episode focuses intensely on who has the power to perform only what God can do and how this power is accessed. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus is the "stronger one" who has come to do God's work against the kingdom of Satan. The crowd and the disciples fail to see that this battle is not won by human effort, but solely by faith in God whose presence and power are available in Jesus. An unbelieving heart threatens success because it does not give glory to the one who works all-powerful deeds. The implied prayer promise of Mark 9:29 is therefore
conditioned on faith, faith in God—that he has power to do "all things"—and faith in his representative, Jesus of Nazareth. Such faith is expressed through prayer.

Sufficient evidence was found in this episode and in the rest of Mark to conclude that Jesus himself prayed in the process of exorcisms and healings, and that prayer was the means by which he endured the struggle against the demonic world and the opposition he received from those who questioned his motives and methods. To this extent, Jesus is himself the "believer" in the episode (9:23), trusting in God to do his work in the midst of opposition. The story, therefore, places Christology at the heart of prayer, along with God's kingdom-power and faith.

Mark 9:29 promises success to prayer, but with certain qualifications. Firstly, the petitioner and/or beneficiary must believe that God can do the humanly impossible (9:23). That is, the petitioner has abandoned reliance upon self and human capability and recognised in God alone the power to answer their request. Secondly, the petitioner recognises that God's kingdom—and therefore his ability to do all things—is fully revealed in Jesus his agent. Thirdly, the petitioner recognises that any dealings with God in prayer necessitate joining the struggle of the kingdom in the present age. The kingdom has broken into the here and now, but not shattered its opposition into powerlessness—there is another power at work apart from God's active reign. Yet, by prayer, this other kingdom is resisted and God's kingdom moves forward. As the boy was raised by Jesus' hand, so believers may be assured of Jesus' ongoing presence in the midst of their struggle against opposing forces (cf. Jas 5:14–16; 2 Cor 1:8–11; 4:7–15; Eph 6:18–19).

Jesus' mediating role in prayer to those who entrust themselves to God through him is here set forth as a key component in the relationship between promise and limitation in petitionary prayer. His presence as example and mediator of God's kingdom power in the midst of strife was implied in the Lord's Prayer and in the unconditional prayer promises, but in this healing-exorcism context his centrality is accentuated. The episode also shows the kind of faith from which prayer must arise. Although arguments have been mounted to jettison this Markan prayer promise from the genuine sayings of Jesus, it provides a missing link between Jesus' prayer teaching and his practice, particularly under distress.
D. "Whatever You Ask in Prayer...It Will Be Yours" (Mark 11:22–25)

The first prayer promise of Mark's Gospel (9:29) is set within the context of the struggle of Jesus (and his disciples) against their spiritual enemies. In the previous section, a case was presented that exorcisms such as those performed by Jesus were accompanied by dependent and resolute prayer. Both the faith of the supplicant and Jesus' faith appeared to be included in the success of the exorcism (9:22–24), and the consequent extension of God's realm. The second prayer promise in Mark's Gospel (11:22–25) is considerably longer and more deliberate, but should be seen as continuing the first one (9:29) since it echoes its language and themes. The following analysis will again focus on the Markan version of the saying, which is more deliberate and more detailed than those found in the other Synoptic Gospels.

1. The Literary Context of Mark 11:22–25

Mark 11:22–25 occurs near the beginning of a new section of Mark's Gospel that runs through to the end of the book (Mark 11:1–16:8). Jesus has completed his journey to Jerusalem, entered the city, and gone to its heart, the temple (11:1–11). Jesus does not remain in Jerusalem during the festive season of Unleavened Bread, but travels in and out. It is during these daily journeys that he sees a fig tree in the distance and goes to it to find figs (11:12–14). Finding none, he curses the tree and then straight away enters the temple and drives out the traders, pronouncing that instead of a house of prayer, the temple has become a den of thieves (11:15–17; cf. 119 See section C.1 above, for comparisons.

Matthew's version (21:21–22) adds little to the overall purpose of the thesis and will not be examined separately. The following differences from Mark's version may be noted: (1) the imperative construction "have faith in God" moves into the apodosis of the mountain-moving promise ("if you have faith and do not doubt"; cf. 17:20 par. Luke 17:6), which then becomes a "not only, but also" comparison; (2) the necessity of faith is maintained, but it is not expressed as strongly as Mark's subjunctive and imperative use of πίστεύειν, which is changed into a participle governed by the verb "to ask" in Matthew; and, (3) the aorist ἐλάβετε is replaced by the future ἐμπιστεύεσθε. Matthew appears to have normalised the prayer language of the unit to fit in with the "asking" and "receiving" pattern found in the other prayer promises of the gospel (Matt 7:8 par. Luke 11:10; cf. Jas 1:5, 6, 7; 4:3; 1 John 3:22). However, there is no softening of the extent of the promise in Matthew. "All things whatsoever" (πάντα δοσα δοῦ) is retained in Matthew's gospel and so the result of the above changes at a theological level is minimal. As noted earlier, the repetition of the "mountain removal" saying found earlier in Matthew 17:20 reinforces the power of faith that does not doubt as a discipleship requirement.

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Isa 56:7; Jer 7:11). The disciples' comment upon the withered fig tree on the following day (11:20–21) leads to Jesus' uttering the prayer saying (11:22–25).

The prayer promise is issued in a sequence of events in which Jesus and his disciples move into and out of Jerusalem, via Bethsaida, three times. This movement, and the events that occur along the way, can be diagrammed as follows:

**DIAGRAM III.1 JESUS' MOVEMENTS IN MARK 11–14**

**Day 1**
- Bethpage and Bethany (11:1) → Jerusalem and the temple (11:11)

**Day 2**
- Bethany (11:11) → Fig Tree #1 (11:12–14) (on Mt of Olives) → Jerusalem Temple Cleansing and interpretation (11:15–17) → Narrator's comment "They sought a way to destroy him" (11:18) → Jesus departs city (11:19)

**Day 3**

The fig tree episodes (11:12–14, 20–21) and the prayer saying (11:22–25) occur on the Mount of Olives, in between the city and Bethany, where Jesus is staying. How these stories impact on one another has become a significant challenge for the
interpretation of Mark's Gospel. Most commentators are rightly agreed that the temple cleansing episode (11:15–17) is in some way prefigured by the cursing of the fig tree (11:12–14). Although the exact parallels are not agreed upon, the fig-tree episode most likely prefigures a future judgement on the temple (cf. 13:2; 14:58; 15:29), with a special focus on the responsibility of its religious leadership (11:18, 27–33). However, since this connection would hold true without the second half of the fig tree story (11:20–21), something else is being communicated by the writer in separating the cursing (vv. 12–14) from the withering of the fig tree (vv. 20–21; cf. Matt 21:19).

Recent interpreters have argued that Mark here uses a technique called *intercalation*, that is, the intentional bracketing one story by another, to convey additional meanings. Here, the fig tree episodes (11:12–14, 20–21) bracket the temple cleansing (11:15–17) and are followed by the prayer saying (11:22–25), perhaps forming a double intercalation (fig tree ➔ temple as house of prayer ➔ fig tree ➔ prayer saying). Many scholars have concluded that the temple as a "house of prayer" has been replaced either with the Markan community as a new "house" of prayer or with Jesus himself as the new temple (cf. 14:58; 15:29). The temple's existence was pivotal for prayer in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., esp. 1 Kgs 8:14–61) and subsequent literature (Jud 4:9–15; 2 Macc 10:25–26; 3 Macc 1:20–24). On this view, the "mountain […] thrown into the sea" (v. 23) is the mountain on which the temple stands that has lost its pre-eminence because of the corruption of its leaders (cf. 15:38; 14:58; 15:29). The fig-tree cursing, the temple "cleansing," and the mountain-moving prayer saying all line up. It is regularly concluded that the episode concerns the Markan or Christian community who may be assured of their prayers being heard, even with the destruction of the temple (cf. 13:2), or in the midst of

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123 For example, Dowd, *Prayer*, 52–55, concludes, "The prayer catechesis [Mark 11:22–25] is addressed to the Markan community, represented in the narrative by the disciples. They are the 'house of prayer for all the nations' that the temple had failed to become" (54; see n. 86 as well).

124 For example, Moloney, *Mark*, 222–228. Others have noted, additionally, that the temple cleansing concludes with an almost verbatim quote from the LXX of Isaiah 56:7 about prayer (Mark 11:17 par. Matt 21:13; Luke 19:46). And, to cap off the whole undertaking, the frequent crossing by Jesus and the disciples of the Mount of Olives has led some interpreters to see messianic inferences here, including some apocalyptic intertextuality (e.g., Zech 14:4–5).


mountainous opposition from leaders of the temple.\(^{127}\) The "house of prayer" that should have been brought into being by Israel and its leaders will be replaced by the believing and praying community; prophecy will be fulfilled, and the nations will be reached (11:17; cf. Isa 56:7).

Unfortunately, the above argument (which is virtually a consensus) is without explicit support in the text. Firstly, the idea of the Christian community as a "house" is not mentioned anywhere in the book; there is not even a post-resurrection gathering of the disciples indoors (compare Luke 24:28–49; Acts 1:12–14; 2:1, 42, 44; John 20:19–29). The existence of a Markan "community"—an increasingly disputed proposition\(^ {128}\)—has been read into the scene and not read out of it. Secondly, the interpretation has lost control of its imagery. The "house of prayer" has not only been replaced, it is now casting "mountains" of Jewish opposition into the sea! Elsewhere in Mark Jesus speaks plainly of the disciples’ future opposition and their need to pray at that time (e.g., Mark 13:5–31, esp. v. 18; 14:32–42). Finally, as the graphic above shows, interlocking intercalations may be multiplied still further,\(^ {129}\) and the desire to accommodate so many of them may say more about the enterprise of interpreting them than anything else.\(^ {130}\) The forward movement of the narrative should control exegesis rather than opaque intercalations. The best that one can say is that the cursing of the fig tree leads both to the cleansing of the temple and to the prayer saying.\(^ {131}\) The cleansing of the temple is clearly pivotal in the Markan narrative and plot, but it is not obviously connected with the prayer saying. For all these reasons, the present analysis will set the fig tree episode as the primary hermeneutical control of the prayer saying Mark 11:22–25—since the prayer promise arises directly out of this event (vv. 20–21)—rather than the fig tree and the temple event together.\(^ {132}\) The main question to answer here is: What does the prayer

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\(^{129}\) (1) Tree $\rightarrow$ Temple $\rightarrow$ Tree; (2) Tree $\rightarrow$ Temple $\rightarrow$ Tree $\rightarrow$ Prayer saying; (3) Tree $\rightarrow$ Temple $\rightarrow$ Plot against Jesus $\rightarrow$ Tree $\rightarrow$ Prayer saying $\rightarrow$ Plot.

\(^{130}\) For a recent critique of intercalations in Mark 11, see Esler, "Withered Fig Tree," 44–52.

\(^{131}\) Correctly, Crump, *Petitionary Prayer*, 32.

\(^{132}\) So also Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 186: ‘Jesus’ teaching on prayer has to do with one’s relationship with God (11:22–24) and with others (11:25) and is only obliquely
promise of Mark 11:24 and its immediate context say about petitionary prayer and its limitations?

2. Exegesis

a. Structure and Text Analysis of Mark 11:22–25

22 καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει αὐτοῖς· [A1?]
εἴχετε πίστιν θεοῦ. [B1]
23 ὧμιν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι [A2]
ὅταν εἴπη τῷ δρεὶ τούτῳ:
ἀρθητί καὶ βλήθητι εἰς τήν θάλασσαν,
καὶ μὴ διακριθῆ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ
ἀλλὰ πιστεύετε ὅτι δὲ λαλεῖ γίνεται, [B2]
ἐσται αὐτῷ. [C2]
24 διὰ τοῦτο λέγω ὑμῖν, [A3]
pάντα ὅσα προσέχεσθε καὶ ἀιτείσθε,
πιστεύετε ὅτι ἔλαβετε, [B3]

related to his teaching in the temple. In the temple precincts, Jesus cites Isa 56:7 regarding God's design for the temple to be 'a house of prayer for all the Gentiles' in contrast to what it had in fact become—'a cave of robbers.' Thus prayer is a connecting motif, although its development in 11:22–25 has nothing to do with either Isa 56:7 or the temple demonstration itself. This teaching stands closer thematically to 9:28–29. And, again: "[T]he [fig tree] story has the function of a nature miracle in the pre-Markan tradition (11:12–14, 20–24; and in Matt 18:22) but has the dual function of a curse miracle (11:12–14, 15–19) and a nature miracle (11:20–25) in Mark's Narrative. It provides the interpretive framework for the temple scene in 11:15–19 and the basis for the teaching on prayer and 'faith in God' in 11:22–25" (150–151). Esler, "Withered Fig Tree," 59, primarily interprets the fig tree through the prayer teaching: "Faced with the difficult material in his source describing Jesus successfully cursing a fig tree, Mark accepts the challenge it represents and chooses to interpret it in line with the message of 9:14–29. In brief, the fig tree is made to yield a further exemplification of the assertions that 'all things are possible to him who has faith' (9:23) and that some tasks require the power of prayer." However, he secondarily interprets it through the "house of prayer saying" (59–60), in a way similar to Moloney, Mark, 222–228. There is symbolic relationship between the sections, but not one that is explicit in the text.

133 Ν D Ὁ f1 13 28. 33. 565. 700 pc it sy begin the quotation of Jesus' words with εἰ. Although strongly represented, this variant may best be understood to have arisen because of awkward syntax and/or to bring it into line with Luke 17:6. See Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 184; Taylor, St Mark, 466, for further details. To allow the variant to stand would render the sentence unintelligible since δὲ ἄν εἴπη τῷ δρεὶ τούτῳ κτλ. is an implied protasis for the following ἔσται αὐτῷ; so Dowd, Prayer, 59. Furthermore, preceding an ὧμιν-saying with a protasis is not otherwise known in the NT, and indeed undermines the very nature of such a saying; so Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 184.
134 ἔλαβετε is represented in Ν B C L W Δ Ψ 892. 2427 and is therefore textually secure. The present (either indicative or imperative, λαμβάνετε A f1 13 33 M) and the
Mark 11:22–25 evidences common vocabulary and syntax in three parts: an introductory asseveration in support of the promise (line A), a protasis (line B), and an apodosis that forms the promise (line C). Verse 22 acts as summary exhortation for the unit while verses 23 and 24—with identical syntax and matching vocabulary (especially the command to believe)—make up its heart.\(^{136}\) The requests in verses 22–24 move from the specific ([the fig tree]; "this mountain") to the general ("all things"), and believing is expressed more confidently as the unit proceeds (from "having faith," v. 22 \(\rightarrow\) believing without doubt, v. 23 \(\rightarrow\) believing that what is asked for has been received, v. 24). It may be too much to speak of step parallelism in verses 22–24, but there is a clear rhetorical design in the sayings that leads the reader towards the final saying about prayer. Verse 25 is an additional condition of prayer that results from the prayer instruction in verse 24.

**b. Mark 11:22–23**

The opening command of the unit responds to Peter’s observation about the withered fig tree Jesus had cursed the day before (v. 21). Jesus’ command is issued in the future (found in Matt 21:22, λήμψεσθε D Θf\(^1\) 565. 700) are obvious smoothing attempts. The aorist tense is thought to represent the “Semitic usage of the prophetic perfect,” Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft/United Bible Societies, 1994), 109. So too, Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 184. As noted in the chapter on the Lord’s Prayer above (II.C.2), the aorist imperative is used to specify petition within a situation. However, the present imperatives and pronouncements in the present tense mute this specificity into a strong determination or focus upon the object of prayer. See Campbell, *Verbal Aspect in the Indicative*, 117.

\(^{135}\) A (C, D) Θ (f\(^{1}\) 33) \(\overline{\text{M}}\) lat sy\(^{b}b\) bo\(pt\); Cyp include εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς οὐκ ἀφίετε, οὐδὲ δὲ πατὴρ ὑμῶν (ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐδρανοῖς) ἀφίησει τὰ παραπτώματα ὑμῶν, numbered in KJV as v. 26. Its omission by B L W Δ Ψ 565. 700. 892. 2427 pc k l sy\(^{b}\) sa bo\(pt\), and the clear allusions to Matthew 6:14–15, indicate it is secondary. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 109; Evans, *Mark 8:27–16:20*, 184; and Meier, *A Marginal Jew*, 2:981, n. 43, for discussion.

\(^{136}\) Pesch, *Markus*, 2:202–204. Although v. 22 is not formally in a conditional sentence format this may be presumed from vv. 20–21. The inference of the unit is: "If you have faith in God, then what you see done to this fig tree will be possible for you too."
present tense (ἐξέτε) and so refers to situations in general rather than to this particular circumstance. It implies that the listeners are to take this event (the withered fig tree) and apply it widely about God in some way.

The unusual expression "have faith in God" (ἐξέτε πίστιν θεοῦ) is not found anywhere else in the New Testament (or the LXX). A subjective genitive for θεοῦ is possible ("you have the faithfulness of God"), but does not match the disciples' astonishment over a nature miracle being performed, which necessitates a challenge to their worldview. The objective genitive ("in God") is therefore a more preferable translation. ἐξέτε could be an indicative (i.e., "you have faith in God"), however other occurrences of πίστις with the verb ἐξείν (Matt 17:20 par. Luke 17:6; Mark 4:40; Acts 14:9) are not indicatives. ἐξέτε πίστιν θεοῦ means the same thing as "believe in God" (πιστεύετε θεῶ; cf. Mark 1:15; 5:36; 9:23, 24, 42; 11:23, 24; 15:32). Verse 22 relates specifically to the performance of miracles by invoking God's power. Jesus (apparently) performs his miracles out of his own (prayerful) faith and he calls the disciples to emulate him in this.

Mark 11:23 continues the injunction of verse 22, beginning with an asseveration (δὲ ἡ λέγω ὅμως δὴ τι) that points to an even greater wonder than the withering of the fig tree (cf. John 14:12, 13–14). The phrase "this mountain" (τὸ ὁρεῖ πῶς) has been identified by some as either the Mount of Olives or the temple mount. The view that this is a literal mountain, however, should be modified in

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137 Campbell, "Verbal Aspect in the Non-Indicative," 117.
138 The oft-cited parallel in Rom 3:3 (τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταφθάνει;) is not a true comparison since the verb ἐξέτε is absent; so also Taylor, St Mark, 466.
139 Dowd, Prayer, 59–62; Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 186; Lohmeyer, Markus, 448; cf. BDAG, 819, πίστις, 2.b. Even where God is not named he appears to be the object of πίστις (Matt 17:20 par Luke 17:5–6; Matt 21:21; Col 2:12; Heb 11:3–33, 39; Jas 1:6; 5:15). See Walls, The Faith of Jesus, 42–46, for a recent study in favour of the subjective genitive.
140 Jesus does not elsewhere commend the disciples for their faith in an unreserved way. Rather, the opposite; see section C.2 above on Mark 9:19.
141 France, Mark, 448.
142 Pesch, Markus, 2:204.
143 Pesch, Markus, 2:204.
144 The Mount of Olives is mentioned in Mark 11:1. Bolt, The Cross, 88, n. 5; Gundry, Mark, 649, 653–654; Pesch, Markus, 2:204, argue for the Mount of Olives, and Telford, Barren Temple, 56–59, 95–127; Wallis, The Faith of Jesus, 42, for the Jerusalem mount as the site of "this mountain." But the identification of the
the light of the fact that Jesus makes a general promise here ("whomever says", δεῦτε ἄν ἐπίπη) that must apply to those who do not stand on either the Mount of Olives or the temple mount.  

145 Jewish and Greco-Roman parallels show that this metaphor was a common way of speaking about God's omnipotence, frequently within a salvation or judgement context.  

146 Verse 23 returns readers to the foundation of all prayer: that God can do what is impossible for human beings (Mark 10:27; 14:36; 13:22; 9:23; cf. LXX Gen 18:14; Job 10:13; 42:2; Rom 4:16–22; Philo Moses 1.31 §174; Virtues 5 §26; etc.).  

147 The divine power revealed in Jesus' preaching, healing, and exorcising ministry is now available for those who "have faith in God" (v. 22).  

However, the kind of "faith" required is defined over against doubt: καὶ μὴ διακριθῆ ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἄλλα πιστεῦῃ ὅτι ὁ λαλεῖ γίνεται ("and has no doubt in his heart but believes that what he says is coming to pass"). That "doubt" is "in the heart" means that it goes to the inner workings of the individual (i.e., motives) rather than to his/her mind alone.  

148 But what underlies this doubt? In another prayer-promise context, James 1:5–8, faith is again contrasted with doubt. In James, doubt refers to an inability to see the trials of one's life as God's means of perfecting his work (of salvation). "Doubt" is a moral failure in James, it signals a divided allegiance between God and the "world" (depicted by James as δίψυχος [1:8; 4:8]; cf. Barn 19.5 par. Did. 4.4; 1 Clem 11.2; 2 Clem 19:2, 5; Herm. Mand. 9:2, 4, 5, 6).  

149 While "doubt" is not found explicitly in Mark apart from 11:23, it is inferred in

mountain does not impact on the proverbial nature of the saying, which infers the humanly impossible; so France, Mark, 449; Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 188–190.  

146 The use of the aorist imperatives would initially imply a specificity of situation, i.e., remove this mountain. In this instance, however, Jesus is illustrating and hence speaks about the mountain he stands upon, and so the aorist is required. The key part of the saying, however, is in the present tense, as will be shown below.  

147 Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 102; cf. Dowd, Prayer, 75–78, 91–92, on Philo and other writings within Greco-Roman worldviews.  

148 BDAG, 508, καρδία: the "seat of spiritual, physical and mental life." See chs. VIII.B.5, IX. 3, 5, and X.2 below for more details on Paul's understanding of the "heart" and prayer.  

149 See exegesis of Jas 1:5–8 in ch. VII.B.1 below and, Murphy-O'Connor, "The Prayer of Petition," 407–408.
the episode just examined in Mark 9:14–29 ("I believe! Help my unbelief!"). The disciples (and perhaps all participants) were referred to there as an "unbelieving generation" (9:19), primarily because they failed to recognise the power of demonic evil and the necessity of open-hearted faith in God's promises. Both the father of the boy and the disciples (and others) exemplified "doubting in the heart." Elsewhere in Mark, faith is opposed by "fear" (4:40–41; 5:36; 16:8), a state found elsewhere in Scripture to cause doubt and one that muddies true dependence upon God and his promises (cf. Gen 15:1; 21:17; 35:17; Exod 14:13; Isa 7:4; 8:11–13; Luke 1:30, 38, etc.).

If, therefore, "doubt" may be briefly summarised as hedging expectations of God because of fear or divided loyalties, then the instruction to "believe that what you say will happen" (ἀλλὰ πιστεύῃ ὅτι λαλεῖ γίνεται) in Mark 11:23 is intended as its opposite and its cure.¹⁵¹ What kind of "faith" is it that leads to "mountain-moving" miracles? Once again, it is not the amount or strength of an individual's faith—as evident by their boldness, for example¹⁵²—that leads to miraculous events taking place, but the object in which one's faith is placed. This is obvious from the flow of the unit (vv. 22–24). Verse 23 assumes the object of faith from the command to "have faith in God" in verse 22. Faith is not belief in one's own words or their power, or even belief in one's own faith, but reliance upon the God who—through Jesus—states that "all things are possible" (9:23; cf. 11:24; 14:36; Rom 4:20–22). In effect, Mark 11:23 recasts Jesus' promise to the father of the possessed boy in 9:23 in dramatic terms.¹⁵³ The father in the earlier prayer-promise episode provides an illustration of moving from doubt to faith. His faith is far from self-confidence or even boldness before God, but is a confession before Jesus of his need of God's help (9:24). Jesus, upon hearing this "confession," demonstrates that God's kingdom is at work here-and-now, conquering the power of evil by exorcising the demon from the boy (9:25–27; cf. 3:22–27). A "mountain" is moved. The faith spoken of in Mark

¹⁵¹ Once again the present imperative is used, which applies to situations in general. The specific content of that faith here is believing that God will do what the believer has requested, that it "will take place"(γίνεται). The futuristic present γίνεται is not common but is the best understanding of this verb. The aorist passive imperatives are reverential, recognising that it is God who will do this.
¹⁵³ The two episodes are intentionally related along with a number of other Markan doublets. By beginning with the longer prayer promise of 11:22–25, many scholars, e.g., Crump, Jesus the Intercessor, chs. 1, 2, fail to see all these interconnections.
11:23 is a far cry from a total or blind faith, which is a mere human enterprise, often thought to underlie instantaneous miracles on demand. Faith is not about positive thinking, but recognition of the presence of the divine being in the person of Jesus Christ and the humility to admit that one can do nothing except ask for help. Jesus' mediation is pivotal to the event: the call to faith in Mark 11:22 is based on the miracle that Jesus performed (11:12–14, 21) and the promise of miracles is made with his authority ("truly, I say to you," v. 23).

**c. Mark 11:24**

Mark 11:24 is the prayer promise proper. It is an application or extension of verse 23 ("for this reason," διὰ τοῦτου) that also develops the key elements of verses 22 and 23 (i.e., God's omnipotence, dependent faith, and the mediating promise of Jesus). The syntax of the promise in verse 24 is almost identical to that of verse 23 but more generalised. The new feature is prayer, which is brought forward in the sentence for emphasis, and may be seen as an expression of the faith mentioned in the preceding verses.

The phrase "all things whatsoever" (πάντα δεῦρο) encapsulates the fig-tree withering and the mountain-removal illustration and applies them to any prayer request of God. Furthermore, the adjective πάντα resonates with the "all things are possible" sayings of the previous prayer-promise context and elsewhere in Mark (9:23; 10:27; 14:36), pointing to the sovereign rule of God manifest in Jesus, the announcer of this prayer promise.

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154 Commentators seem to use up a fair amount of energy dismissing the wrong idea of faith; e.g., Marshall, *Faith*, 167–168; Crump, *Jesus the Intercessor*, 33–39. However, in getting rid of the bathwater (human confidence or positive thinking), the baby (true faith, which has God as its object and Jesus as its agent) is threatened as well.

155 The double imperative construction ("[whatever] you ask for in prayer"; προσευχήσεθε καὶ αἰτήσεθε) is epegegetic, rightly translated by both the NRSV and NIV as "whatever you ask for in prayer." The combination of verbs is found in the NT again only at Col 1:9 οὐ παυόμεθα ὑπὲρ ὡμόν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι, ἵνα πληρωθῇ τῇ ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος σαυτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ, where the specifics of the request follow in a ἵνα clause. The use of the middle form αἰτεῖσθε in Mark 11:24 is stylistic and does not infer asking with self-interest (cf. BDAG, 80, αἰτέω, "without any real distinction betw. act. and mid.").

156 The generalizing tendencies of the unit may be seen in the relative clauses that begin each of vv. 23–25, leaving v. 22 as the heading or summary introduction.
The condition of the promise ("believe that you have received it," πιστεύετε ὅτι ἐλάβετε) contains an unusual use of the aorist indicative (ἐλάβετε) as the content (ὅτι) of faith. The usual translation is "you have received it" (NRSV; NIV), which "expresses the confidence of that belief through the certainty of a future fulfilment of the request." The aorist here is said by some to reflect an underlying Semitic perfect, or is considered an example of the rare futuristic aorist. However, the aorist does not here express super-confidence or futuristic imagination, but is a timeless aorist that matches the present imperative πιστεύετε. One prays with the expectation of being supplied, genuinely and without pretence (cf. v. 23, "not doubting"). The focus is on the "Provider" who is asked and not the petitioner who asks.

Both verses 23 and 24 conclude with the same promise: "it will happen for him/you" (καὶ ἐσται ὑμῖν). Many commentators think the future tense (here, ἐσται) is time-bound, here referring either to an instantaneous result or one that will come at the "consummation." However, within a conditional sentence, the future carries intention or expectation, but is temporally uncertain. There is no thought in the use of the future ἐσται that the thing requested will occur on demand. There is

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157 Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 102.
158 For example, Pesch, Markus, 2:206.
159 BDF §333(2), within a conditional sentence.
160 Porter, Verbal Aspect, 237: "[…] believe that you receive, and it will be to you […], with no specification of the time of receipt."
161 The present could not be used as it implies incompleteness. However, the present of the main verb πιστεύετε guides the interpretation of the content of faith.
162 T. Söding, Glaube bei Markus: Glaube an das Evangelium Gebetsglaube und Wunderglaube im Kontext der markinischen Basileiatheologie und Christologie (SBB 12; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1985), 332, suggests it points to realized eschatology.
163 Crump, Petitionary Prayer, 37–38. Crump advocates a realised eschatological reading of the unit: "[…] some answers arrive more quickly than others—some in our lifetimes, others at the end of the age."
164 Grammarians differ over the aspectual status of the future indicative. Fanning, Verbal Aspect, 120–124, non-aspectual; Campbell, Verbal Aspect in the Indicative, 159–160; Campbell, "Verbal Aspect in the Non-Indicative," 15, aspectual, but combines future temporal reference and perfective aspect; McKay, A New Syntax, 34, aspectual, but expresses intention that includes "simple futurity"; Porter, Verbal Aspect, 403–439, "aspectually vague"; "grammaticalizing a unique semantic feature [+ expectation]" (438).
165 Porter, Verbal Aspect, 439: "[T]he future speak[s] of events in a different way, not making assertions about that which is claimed to exist but grammaticalizing
always a "gap" between request and fulfilment, not a logical gap, but a temporal one (e.g., Matt 6:33).

d. Mark 11:25
Verse 25 places a condition upon the prayer promise of verse 24 and hence the promise to faith in verse 23. The Lord's Prayer linked God's forgiveness to the need to be forgiving of others (Matt 6:12 par. Luke 11:4; cf. C.5.b. above). In the exegesis of the previous chapter, forgiveness was found to be a condition upon petitionary prayer. The phrase "your Father in heaven" (ὁ πατὴρ ὁ ἐν τοῖς ὀφρανοίς), while common in Matthew (e.g., 5:16, 45, 48; 6:1, 14, 26, 32; 7:11; 23:9; cf. Luke 11:13), is found only here in Mark. The address was discussed in the exegesis of the Lord's Prayer above and will be covered again in the following chapter on the Gethsemane prayer. The uniqueness of Mark 11:25 is that it contains the only Markan reference to the Father with respect to the disciples. In the flow of Mark 11:22–25 the movement is from the vertical relationship with the God of power (vv. 22–24) to the horizontal necessity to forgive others (v. 25). One may summarise this verse as follows: Do not make a request for God's power to be unveiled without being aware that it is a forgiving and relational power.

expectation regarding the not yet in existence." The Markan record of the withering of the fig tree—which acts as the primary example for the prayer saying—supports this understanding by separating the pronouncement from the event itself, which is hidden from the reader (comp. Matt 21:19–20).


167 Contra Dowd, Prayer, 126. While no strong grammatical connection can be forged between verses 24 and 25, the word καὶ does not introduce an additional promise to verse 24 but qualifies it.

168 Dowd, Prayer, 126–129, details the relationship of petition and sacrifices (and pleas) for forgiveness in Hellenistic religion generally.

169 Söding, Glaube bei Markus, 330, directs attention to Mark 2:1–12, esp. v. 7. The connection of "moving mountains" and being at peace with one another is also found in Gos. Thom. 48, 106. However, the Gospel of Thomas does not appear to have a theology of prayer; indeed the opposite appears to be the case (Gos. Thom. 14: "If you pray you will be condemned"). Praying appears to be connected to fasting and belongs to the time "when the bridegroom comes out from the bridal chamber" (104).
3. Conclusion

Mark 11:22–25 issues the gospel's second prayer promise. The prayer promise of Mark 11:24 comes at the conclusion of a section about faith and the performing of omnipotent acts (11:22–23, cf. 11:12–14, 21–22). The whole unit reinforces and develops the themes established in the previous prayer-promise unit of Mark 9:14–29: (1) the availability of God's power or kingdom benefits unveiled in Jesus' proclamation and works; (2) a faith that looks to Jesus for its example and the mediation of God's promise; and, (3) the place of prayer as the human means of accessing the blessings of the kingdom. Mark 11:22–24 builds a picture of how the kingdom's power may be accessed by a faith that not only believes God has the power to do what is asked of him, but asks out of pure motives, without pretence or arrogance. Petitionary prayer, therefore, is to be humble and undiluted, cognizant of its own weaknesses and need of forgiveness before God. Success is not found in the intensity of the petitioner's faith, but in the confidence of resting on Jesus' promises and his representation of God as the Father (who is not only all-powerful, but also all-loving). One may be calm in approaching God, knowing that he may be depended upon to answer the prayers of those who ask what is humanly impossible: he will do it. Such prayer is not about "mind games" or positive thinking, but the integration of whole-hearted dependence upon God's power and goodness alongside a humility that is more ready to forgive than be forgiven. The condition of forgiveness reflects that which is at the heart of the promise in any case: the mediation of Jesus. In the final prayer promise of Mark this mediation is passively presented but is present nevertheless.

With respect to the thesis question, this episode once again draws attention to the prominent place that the prayer promises must take in any theology of petitionary prayer. Whilst strange to modern ears, this and the preceding Markan prayer promise highlight the dynamic reality of God's kingdom power available to faith that casts itself upon the living Jesus and lives this out in relationships with others.

E. Conclusions from the Synoptic Prayer Promises

Two types of prayer promises occur in the Synoptic Gospels, one without conditions (set within the [prayer] teaching ministry of Jesus [Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13]), and two with conditions (set within Jesus' exorcising and miraculous ministry; Mark
9:29; 11:24 par. Matt 21:22). Each form emphasizes differing aspects of shared features relevant to the thesis question. Firstly, both types of prayer promise stress the character of God over against human effort as the key to successful petition. The unconditional prayer promise stresses the abundant generosity of the Father to his children. God is disposed to answer. The conditional promises emphasize the immense power of God available to those who believe and do not doubt.

Secondly, both types of prayer promise presume that Jesus speaks with the authority of God: Jesus makes the promises on God's behalf and is to be believed (Mark 9:23; 11:23). However, Jesus is not a mere conduit of God's promises, but is one who himself steadfastly believes in God. The context of the first conditional promise, and the gospel records of other miracles, hint that Jesus is the one who believes and for whom, therefore, all things are possible. Jesus unveils the kingdom of God in the midst of spiritual trials and it would appear that prayer was part of his weaponry. Jesus' mediatorial role is two-way: he makes promises on God's behalf and is the one petitioners look to for answers to their needs. Yet he is also the one who looks to the Father in his own trials (Mark 10:38–39) and battles against Satan, whether on his own behalf (1:12–13; 8:33; 14:35–36; 1:35[?]) or on behalf of others (9:23). The mediation and prayer of Jesus in his earthly ministry opens the door to the prayer in Gethsemane, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

Thirdly—and related to both the previous points—both the conditional and unconditional promises to successful petition are offered within the dynamism of the "already–not yet" kingdom of God revealed in Jesus' ministry. The unconditional promise made this plain through the mention of the Holy Spirit as the gift God gives in answer to prayer (Luke 11:13). The unconditional promises assumed the working of the kingdom in the exorcising role of Jesus found in Mark's Gospel and in the power available to genuine faith. The future tenses of the unconditional promise and the sudden response to Jesus' authoritative command do not convey response on demand to the prayers of believers, but they do convey confidence that answers will come that will progress God's kingdom in unexpected ways. Throughout the New Testament, the Spirit is not only the means by which the Father endows his new age benefits (and gifts) upon individuals and communities, but is also the means by which he comforts and sustains them through trials/temptations and persecution (e.g., Phil 1:18–19). In the episode of the possessed boy, the realm of evil was resisted through prayerful struggle by Jesus, who, unlike the disciples, recognised the
magnitude of the task. While not mentioned in the Markan promises, the operation of the Spirit within the "already–not yet" eschatological tension would account for this phenomenon and grant followers of Jesus confidence that they will see success. Prayer becomes powerful when it entrusts itself to God in the presence of Jesus—like a child who looks to its father to provide what is good.

This leads, fourthly, to the so-called condition upon petitionary prayer of faith. The story of the possessed boy (Mark 9:14–29) provides a real life illustration of someone challenged to believe. The kind of faith required is given moral definition in both Markan prayer-promise episodes. Faith must be undiluted and unconditional, it must look to God to do what only he can do because of who he alone is. Self-interest and advantage is ruled out. In short, faith must glorify God's name (cf. Matt 6:9 par. Luke 11:2; John 12:27–28; 17:1–5). If "faith" may be substituted for "God" in the Markan sayings about what is possible ("all things are possible to the one who believes" [9:23] and "all things are possible to God" [10:27; 14:36]), then it will be a faith that displays God's character. Jesus displays this character and so remains the model believer and petitioner.

Finally, there is a second condition on successful petitionary prayer of forgiveness. This condition was also found in the Lord's Prayer and reinforces the community nature of petition. Faith cannot call out to God for help in the condition of "being evil" (Matt 7:11 par. Luke 11:13) and then be hardened against the brother or sister who has done wrong.

A number of the above five themes support discoveries made about the thesis question in the previous chapter on the Lord's Prayer: the generous character of the Father (given special emphasis in the unconditional prayer promises), the dynamic "already-not yet" nature of the kingdom of God (with the emphasis on the "already"), the sinister nature of evil, and the condition of forgiveness. What is fresh in the prayer promises, and therefore what must be added into an understanding of the tension between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer, is the character of faith depicted in the midst of life's distresses and hence the mediating influence of Jesus, both as petitioner for human need and as conveyer of kingdom power, with the Spirit as the assumed means and content of that benefit. The "new" thing about petitionary prayer here is Jesus' presence before those caught in evil's web and stymied by their own lack of open-hearted faith. In his presence these things are overcome. With the hint in the episode of the demon-possessed boy (Mark 9:27) that
Jesus will continue this role after his resurrection, the conditional prayer promises show the way forward to chapter VII on the Letter of James (5:14–16) where the risen Jesus will again be seen to be mediating God's power among those whose faith is less than what it should be.
IV. JESUS' PRAYER IN GETHSEMANE

A. Introduction

The previous two chapters have established that petitionary prayer in the Synoptic Gospels is promised and limited by a cluster of factors. The Lord's Prayer laid out the main framework: prayer is offered to a God whose name is to be revered, but who is willing and able to bring about his good purposes through his people's prayers for all that they need and all that he seeks to effect in his plan of salvation. This God—who is known as "Father"—has effectively demonstrated his power and love in the dynamic teaching and miraculous ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. However, this kingdom is opposed by another, which is ruled by a power whose days are numbered and yet continues to play havoc among the saints. Nothing will thwart the forward movement of God's kingdom, but his people will be faced with trials and temptations intended to divert them from his path, in particular to disbelieve or take advantage of his powerful goodness or to treat others in a way that does not show his mercy.

As noted in the introductory chapter, Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:35–36 par. Matt 26:39, 41, Luke 22:41–42) is the strongest restriction upon petitionary prayer within the New Testament.¹ The prayer's emphasis on both the boldness to ask ("all things are possible to you") and the

willingness to limit petitionary prayer ("not what I want but what you want") apply the tension found in Lord's Prayer to a specific and painful context.

The examination of the third petition of the Lord's Prayer ("your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," II.4.c, above) has already introduced the theme of God's will and prayer. In the extensive discussion of this petition it was concluded that it spoke of God's will in a holistic and integrated way so as to include the "big picture" salvation plan of God, the translation of this into Jesus' healing ministry, and the individual's struggle to keep the commands of the Father. In many ways the Gethsemane prayer acts as the culmination both of Jesus' prayer examples and prayer teachings covered in the earlier chapters. The themes of an "already–not yet" eschatological framework, dependent faith in the midst of crisis, and the mediation of Jesus for the disciples all reach a climax here. The emphasis of this episode is clearly upon Jesus' own relationship with the Father and the purpose of his mission. Jesus is set forth both as an example and as one who acts on behalf of others.\(^2\)

The Gethsemane prayer scene is found in all three Synoptic Gospels. Mark's Gethsemane story is foundational for Matthew's and Luke's account. Matthew's version has relatively minor changes to Mark, mainly intended to improve Mark's


The question of a Johannine Gethsemane episode should be decided in the negative. While there are clear allusions to the "cup" (John 18:11) and the "hour" (12:23; 13:31, 32), the Johannine perspective of Jesus as the one who willingly lays down his life for the sheep (10:19) means that the approach of the "hour" and the fearful prospect of the cup" are anticipated positively in John when compared to the Synoptics. Nevertheless, these and other similarities (e.g., the virtual quotation of Pss 6:4; 41:7 [*LXX*] in John 12:27) indicate an awareness by John of the last evening of Jesus with his disciples. For comments on the relationship of the Synoptic and Johannine accounts see C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel according to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: SPCK, 1978), 522; Raymond E. Brown, "Incidents That Are Units in the Synoptic Gospels but Are Dispersed in St John," *CBQ* 23 (1961): 143–146; Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2003), 2:875–876.

Statistics: Mark's version contains 181 words, Matthew's 213, and Luke's 138 (not counting vv. 43–44 made up of 26 words). Matthew has used around 80% of Mark's vocabulary. Jesus' three prayer sessions in Mark are filled out by Matthew, including the construction of a new petition in Matt 26:42 that includes the third petition from the Lord's Prayer (comp. 26:42 and 7:10). The Lukan Gethsemane episode follows the Gospel of Mark, but shares less than 15% of its vocabulary. Luke omits Mark 14:33, 34, 35b, 37b, 38c, 39, 40, 41, 42. Through these changes Luke reinforces the theme of Jesus' control of his destiny within the salvation plan of God (e.g., he only prays once, not three times); so Marshall, *Luke*, 828. The disciples' lack of attention is played down in Luke—they sleep from "grief." They are not told to "watch" but are told twice of the importance of praying against temptation. Jesus appears to be watching them. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 2:1438, details nine differences between Luke and Mark: (1) the name of the plot of ground ("Gethsemane") on the Mount of Olives is not mentioned, it is called "the place"; (2) Jesus exhorts all the disciples to pray at the beginning and not to sit, and he does not tell the disciples that he is overwhelmed; (3) Jesus withdraws from (all) the disciples, "about a stone's throw," not "a little further" from the chosen three; (4) Jesus' prayer is not recorded in indirect discourse; (5) Jesus prays the same prayer only once, not three times; (6) Jesus only returns to the disciples once, not three times; (7) All the disciples are found asleep "from grief"; (8) the exhortation to the disciples to pray forms an *inclusio* [vv. 40, 46]; and, (9) if vv. 43–44 are authentic, they provide details wholly absent from Mark. Fitzmyer argues for a "stark abridgement of the Mar[k]an account" rather than an additional source. Others see a strong case for an additional Lukan Gethsemane source, e.g., Joel B. Green, "Gethesmane," *DJG*: 266–267; Murphy-O'Connor, "Gethsemane," 38–39; and, Nolland, *Luke*, 3:1023.
style and reinforce his own discipleship themes. The Synoptic accounts of the Gethsemane scene are in reasonably close agreement with each other, particularly with respect to the central prayer. However, Mark's version retains the most tension between the promise to prayer ("all things are possible for you") and limitation upon prayer ("not what I want but what you want"). Mark also retains a strong tension between Jesus and the disciples. For these reasons this study will concentrate upon the Markan Gethsemane account (Mark 14:32–42), referring to the other Synoptic accounts only when necessary.

Matthew also makes Jesus' initial command to the disciples quite specific, "Sit here, while I go there to pray" and mentions that the disciples came "with him" at the beginning (v. 36) and that they should watch "with him" (v. 38). In vvs. 40, 45 Matthew notes that Jesus "came to the disciples"; Mark 14:37, 41 assumes readers will know this. See Nolland, Matthew, 1098–1099, and Ulrich Luz, Das Evangelium nach Matthäus (Matt 26–28) (EKK 1.4; Neukirchen/Düsseldorf: Neukirchener/Benziger, 2002), 130–133, for details of the Matthean redaction. See John Paul Heil, The Death and Resurrection of Jesus: A Narrative-Critical Reading of Matthew 26–28 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 42–44, 46; Holleran, Gethsemane, 211–212, for the development of the discipleship themes in Matthew's version.

Overall, the Gethsemane story in Mark and Matthew comprises three parts: (1) an introduction to the scene, the participants, and the issue (Mark 14:32–34 par. Matt 26:36–38; cf. Luke 22:39–40); (2) a body that depicts Jesus' three prayers and his interactions with the disciples, ([a] Mark 14:35–38 par. Matthew 26:39–41; [b] Mark 14:39–40 par. Matthew 26:42–43; and, [c] Mark 14:41 par. Matt 26:44–45 [note that Matthew has added a reference to the final departure of Jesus that Mark has assumed]); and, (3) a conclusion to the episode that announces the betrayer's arrival and thereby leads to the next scene (Mark 14:42 par. Matt 26:46; [cf. Luke 22:47]). See prayer comparison chart below.

To exegete each gospel account separately would be repetitious, and there are many other studies of the differences between the Synoptic Gethsemane accounts. There has been some discussion of the so-called sources of the Markan Gethsemane account. Kuhn, "Gethsemane," 260–285, argued that the Markan version is a composition of two previously existing sources (termed "A" [the hour source] and "B" [the cup source]). This has led to three exegeses of the Markan account: A, B, Mark, see e.g., Holleran, Gethsemane, 201–211; Murphy-O'Connor, "Gethsemane," 28–39. This approach has not generally been followed. See Holleran, Gethsemane, 107–145, for a detailed presentation of the source approach, and, Brown, The Death of Jesus, 1:53–57, 2:1493–1521, for detailed critique. There are sufficient grounds to work from the final text of Mark here.
B. Exegesis

The Gethsemane prayer is carefully set within the context of Jesus’ interaction with his disciples. The disciples witness Jesus’ changing disposition and hear his instructions, and yet are repeatedly found to be his opposite. He has come to pray (Mark 14:32) and has brought the disciples for companionship in his trial (cf. the use of the preposition μετά in Matt 26:36, 38, 40).

a. Jesus’ Emotional Display

Jesus’ heavy emotional mood is especially carried by the verb ἐκθομβεῖςθαι in Mark 14:33 (λυπεῖςθαί in Matthew). As noted in the prayer-promise context of Mark 9:29, ἐκθομβεῖςθαί (9:18) means to be "moved to a relatively intense emotional state" by something that causes "great surprise or perplexity," with the precise connotation usually coming from the context. Here the meaning is clearly "to be extremely distressed." When joined to ἰδημονεῖν ("to be distressed,
troubled, or in anxiety”; cf. Phil 2:26) the pair of verbs present Jesus at a very low emotional ebb, although the cause is not immediately apparent.

The narrative description of Jesus' condition in verse 33 is supplemented by his own words in verse 34: περίλυπός ἐστιν ἡ ψυχή μου ἔως θανάτου ("my soul grieved to the point of death”; par. Matt 26:38). This lament is almost a quotation of the refrain from Psalms 42:6, 12; 43:5 [41:6, 12 and 42:5 LXX]: τί περίλυπος εἶ ἡ ψυχή (cf. Psalm 55:4–5 [LXX 54:4–5]). The allusion suggests that the cause of his anguish is the apparent absence of God in the face of enemies.

The episodes preceding the Gethsemane scene suggest the following causes for Jesus' mood: (1) his anointing "for burial" (Mark 14:8); (2) the preceding betrayal announcement (14:18); (3) the announcements of the disciples' desertion because the shepherd will be "struck" (or, "slain"; 14:27; BDAG, 786, πατάσσω l.c.); and, (4) the prediction of Peter's denial (14:31). Jesus senses his removal from the collegiality of the discipleship group as he faces death. But since Jesus is in the disciples' presence when he displays his turmoil, removal from them is not a sufficient cause for it. Something outside the scene appears to be affecting Jesus' mood.

12 BDAG, 19, ἀδημονέω.
13 The episodes preceding the Gethsemane scene suggest the following causes for Jesus' mood: (1) his anointing "for burial" (Mark 14:8); (2) the preceding betrayal announcement (14:18); (3) the announcements of the disciples' desertion because the shepherd will be "struck" (or, "slain"; 14:27; BDAG, 786, πατάσσω l.c.); and, (4) the prediction of Peter's denial (14:31). Jesus senses his removal from the collegiality of the discipleship group as he faces death. But since Jesus is in the disciples' presence when he displays his turmoil, removal from them is not a sufficient cause for it. Something outside the scene appears to be affecting Jesus' mood.
15 Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 410. Gundry, Mark, 867, sees an echo of Jonah's death wish (Jonah 4:9) here, but the lament Psalms (cf. 31:10–11; 55:5) and Sir 37:1–2 provide clearer and more pertinent background. So also Nolland, Matthew, 1098. See Donahue and Harrington, Mark, 412–413, and especially Feldmeier, Die Krisis, 148–149, 156–162, for details of parallels with the lament Psalms.
b. Jesus Instructs the Disciples to "Watch"

In Mark 14:34 (par. Matt 26:38) Jesus instructs the eleven disciples to "remain here and watch" (μείνατε ὄδε καὶ γρηγορεῖτε). The object of their watching could be the betrayer he has announced (Mark 14:18 par. Matt 26:21). No hint is given that the eleven knew Judas had gone to perform his allotted task, however, so this is unlikely to be the reason for Jesus' instruction. More probable is Jesus' earlier instructions to the disciples in the apocalyptic discourse, which uses the verb γρηγορεῖν. The exact imperative form (γρηγορεῖτε) is found in Mark 13:35, 37 par. Matt 24:42; cf. 13:34, γρηγορῆαι par. Matt 24:43; 25:13; not in Luke). The disciples are warned to be on guard in light of the suddenness of the "master's return" (i.e., the coming of the Son of Man). They must be spiritually and morally awake to the time that is coming upon them. However, "watching" implies more than waiting for the Son of Man at the consummation of this age. Ernest Best says it should be expanded to include the discipleship teaching of Mark 8–10, that is, following in the pattern of Jesus' suffering and death (Mark 8:31; 9:12, 31; 10:33–34; cf. 12:8; 14:27). In brief, then, watching is a life of trusting God just as Jesus trusts his Abba Father through prayer in the midst of testing.

In Mark (and Matthew), Jesus leaves and returns to the disciples three times.

17 μείνατε ὄδε καὶ γρηγορεῖτε, Matt 26:38b adds "with me," μετ' ἐμοῦ.
18 Gundry, Mark, 854.
19 Nolland, Matthew, 1068, says that while, according to Matthew, Jesus knows his betrayer's identity, the disciples do not.
20 Donahue and Harrington, Mark, 407, remark that this verb has "an eschatological context with reference to the time of testing that Jesus' passion presents."
22 Best, Following Jesus, 147–161. The "night" of Mark 13:33–37 may well be symbolic of evil or persecution to come; cf. ch. VIII.B.2 below for a similar understanding of watching in Paul.
them sleeping. On the first occasion (v. 37), Jesus asks whether the disciples (as represented by Peter; cf. 8:32–33; 11:21–22; 14:29–31) are "strong enough" (Ἰσχύος) to stay awake for one hour. As noted in the previous chapter, the verb ἰσχύειν in Mark is generally reserved for Jesus' own strength as the "stronger one" (1:7; 3:27) in contrast to human incapacity in the face of demonic powers (e.g., 5:4; 9:18). The use of this verb here suggests a spiritually induced lethargy among the disciples or at least that they are lacking in obedient faith (cf. Matt 25:1–12). The danger of this lethargy—and hence the urgency of Jesus' call to watch—is reinforced by Jesus' comment that for them, "the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" (τὸ μὲν πνεῦμα πρὸς ἑαυτόν ἔτειλεν ἐν δὲ σάρξ ἀσθενής, Mark 14:38b par. Matt 26:41b; cf. John 6:63).

Two paths lie before the disciples at this point from which they must choose one (note, μέν…δέ). Earlier in Mark Jesus rebuked Peter with these words: "Get behind me Satan, for you are not thinking the things of God but the things of human beings" (Mark 8:33). Peter's human thinking was of Satanic origin, attempting to

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23 Surface-level similarities have been noted between the Gethsemane and Transfiguration episodes (Mark 9:2–9 par. Matt 17:1–8; Luke 9:28–36) in the Synoptic Gospels: (1) the same three disciples (Peter, James, and John) attend Jesus on both occasions; (2) Jesus separates himself from the disciples; (3) the disciples sleep (Luke 9:32); and, (4) the disciples are stunned into speechlessness; cf. A. Kenny, "The Transfiguration and the Agony in the Garden," CBQ 19 (1957): 444–452; Holleran, Gethsemane, 47–49, for details.

24 No connecting particle or adverb is found at the start of the sentence, but it is hard to think of another way of reading it if not as a motivation to act.

25 Since it is a situation over which the disciples have some power to change (and to change quickly), πνεῦμα and σάρξ are not in v. 34 powers outside of the disciples (as in the Pauline use of the contrasting pair, e.g., Rom 8:4, 9; Gal 5:16). The "spirit"—"flesh" contrast in Mark 14:38b has been variously explained. Brown, The Death of Jesus, 1:199, is probably correct in saying that the πνεῦμα here "is the human spirit through which people can be moved to do what is harmonious with God's plan" (i.e., it is willing) and the σάρξ "is the means through which Satan moves to distract people from God's plan" (i.e. it is weak). The Qumran material moves beyond some earlier conceptions, which considered "spirit" to be of the imperishable divine realm and "flesh" of the human realm (e.g., Isa 40:6–8). Qumran sometimes uses "flesh" as a channel through which sinful desires and evil—initiated by the "Spirit of Wickedness"—are allowed to enter into or tempt an individual (1QS 11:12). The Jewish doctrine of the "two inclinations" may lie behind the spirit/flesh distinction in Mark 14:38b. Holleran, Gethsemane, 40–45, reviews the evidence from the OT, Paul, and Qumran, and concludes: "[T]he meaning of Mk 14:38 is that God has gifted the elect with a willing spirit, but if this spirit is to prevail over their weakness before God as men of flesh, it must be active, as it was in Jesus, through the discipline of watchfulness and prayer" (45). See ch. VII.B.2 below for further treatment on the two spirits/inclinations in human beings.
divert Jesus from following the path laid out for him by God. The scene in the Garden of Gethsemane is like Jesus' temptations in the wilderness (Matt 4:1–11 par. Luke 4:1–13). There Jesus alone was tested, but now he is being tested along with his disciples. In Mark 14:34 Jesus warns them that they are on the edge of a cosmic trial and must be alert to its dangers (cf. Luke 22:31–32). For this reason they are urged in verse 38 to watch by "praying" (προσεύχεσθε, Mark 14:38 par. Matt 26:41). The use of the present imperative (γρηγορεῖτε καὶ προσεύχεσθε) points to a general attitude, the aorist (ἳνα μὴ ἔλθητε εἰς πειρασμόν) to the specific content of their praying: that they "do not come into temptation."

The command not to enter into temptation has already been encountered in the chapter on the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:13 par. Luke 11:4). The examination of that petition in Chapter II above concluded that πειρασμός did not refer primarily to the "Great Tribulation," but to those trials continued to be faced by the disciples at any time in the ongoing battle between the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God. Jesus' command implies the disciples have the power to resist temptation and the Satanic realm by faith in God's promises declared by him (cf. 9:22–24 and exegesis in ch. III.C above). Since, the Great Tribulation is an inevitable event on the eschatological timetable, the disciples are being told to endure rather than to escape.

In Mark 14:38, then, Jesus senses the closeness of the Great Tribulation upon himself and fears that the disciples are about to be caught unawares by his own testing and be tempted to turn away from him and his way. Judas has already succumbed (cf. John 13:27, 30) and the remaining eleven are under threat.

26 γρηγορεῖτε καὶ προσεύχεσθε is a hendiadys, it is not two activities that are being requested of the disciples but one, to watch through praying. France, Mark, 586–587, however, argues that the sentence should be translated as, "Watch, and pray that you might not enter into temptation." Donahue and Harrington, Mark, 409, note the connection of watching and praying in Psalms 42:8; 63:6; 77:1–3, all of which are lament psalms. Night time brought greater fear of the enemies upon the psalmist and perhaps Jesus is reflecting this here.


28 Pitre, Tribulation, 490: "They too may well be caught up in the Great Tribulation and suffer the plague of death if they do not keep awake and earnestly pray to be delivered from it."

29 Craig S. Keener, Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 634. Luke pays special attention to the spiritual threat to the disciples. He repeats the instruction to pray at the close of the episode: "Pray that you do not enter into temptation" (προσεύχεσθε μὴ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς πειρασμόν,
At a narrative level, then, the disciples are being contrasted with Jesus for whom the "trial" is one that he must undertake ("grieved to the point of death"). The trial that Jesus faces is one that overwhelms him and he appears to seek the disciples' presence. The disciples' trial, however, is not as imminent, or at least they do not sense it is. Although the disciples' and Jesus' trials are different from each other regarding their intensity and hence their effects, they are related, both in their source and their intent. Jesus' own "willing spirit" was formed in the face of a satanic onslaught that was resisted in prayer; what will happen to the disciples?

C. Conclusion

The setting of Jesus' Gethsemane prayer shows deep unexplained anguish. Jesus' verbal description of it (Mark 14:34) raises the possibility of his being left desolate by God to face an enemy or circumstance too horrible to conceive. He urges the disciples to join him in prayerful vigilance, a command they fail to fulfil, even after explanations of its importance. The "hour" is, therefore, a test for the disciples as well as for Jesus. They must be prayerfully alert to spiritual forces and suffering that will deter Jesus and them from true service of the Father (cf. Mark 8:32–33 par. Matt 20:21–28). Jesus' own "willing spirit" was formed in the face of a satanic onslaught that was resisted in prayer; what will happen to the disciples?

Luke 22:40, 46). In Luke 22:32 Jesus indicated he had prayed for Peter's "faith" when Satan had demanded (God or Jesus?) to sift him like wheat. This time of trial will still come for Peter—doubtless a reference to his denial of Jesus—after which Peter will turn (ἐπιστρέφεται) to strengthen his brothers. Again, in Luke 4:13, it is stated that the devil left Jesus "for a time" (ἀφῆλθεν, Luke 4:13). Now, as his "departure" (ἐξελέλυσεν, 9:31) and hence conquest is imminent, his disciples come under threat. Even though the mission of the Seventy[-Two] inflicted damage on Satan's realm (10:18), Satan has not been defeated. Perhaps here the intention is also to divert Jesus' attention to God's salvation plan and render his mission fruitless. Again, the only sure weapon against this foe for Jesus and for the disciples is prayer. Luke uses γρηγορεῖν only at 12:27, but a synonym is found in the eschatological discourse parallel (21:36, γυμνοεῖν), to which is connected the need to pray for the ability to escape before the coming of the Son of Man (δεῦτε αὐτῷ is used here and in 22:32). The Gethsemane exhortations (22:40, 46) are part of a Lukan trend that appoints prayer the refuge of the disciple in the face of temptation. In the narrative flow of Luke, this instruction means that the disciples must not succumb in the ongoing battle against the devil. The disciples have seen how Jesus persisted in prayer in his mission (Luke 3:22; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28–29; 11:1), and now they must do likewise if they are to follow him in it; cf. Barbour, "Gethsemane," 239–241: "It seems likely [...] that Luke does not think of the death of Jesus as his final peirasmos, or as the supreme example of the operation of demonic powers, except in so far as the death of Jesus constitutes a temptation to the disciples to fall away from faith" (240–241).

16:22, 23; cf. Luke 22:53b; note also John 12:31, which follows Jesus' prayer in 12:27, 28). Of themselves, the disciples are not strong enough to engage successfully in this battle; indeed, they are in danger of succumbing to Satan's temptation through languor. It seems clear that for Jesus an eschatological trial is in session and he needs his disciples to be "with him" in it. His obedience to the Father and theirs are somehow connected.

Gethsemane presents readers with a fully human Jesus, close to the edge of his limits, holding on through prayer and urging his disciples to join him. Jesus' prayer, however, is not that the enemy be resisted (cf. Matt 6:13a par. Luke 11:4c), but that God take away the horror he senses. This prayer signals to readers that there is something about Jesus' Gethsemane prayer that is not transferable to the disciples.

2. The Gethsemane Prayer (Mark 14:35–36)

   a. Introduction
   The context of the Gethsemane prayer is Jesus' personal awareness of an impending eschatological trial. He calls the disciples to his side, but they appear ignorant of his real situation and unable to remain awake and watch with him. Jesus separates himself from his disciples in order to pray. The Gethsemane prayer follows a similar and very clear pattern in each of the Synoptic Gospels.

31 France, Mark, 587, says that the disciples are being presented with "taking the easy way out." Gundry, Mark, 871, says Satan should not be introduced here since he is not mentioned, but the alternative is that Jesus is here not warning but offering a proverb that applies to their blissful ignorance of his trial. This fails to convince since the section is a warning not only to watch for Judas but also to pray.

32 Donahue and Harrington, Mark, 409. Perhaps this is what Matthew means by the addition of the prepositional phrase μετ' ἐμοῦ (Matt 26:40; cf. vv. 36, 38).

33 Questions about the authenticity of the prayer are not dealt with here. Mark Kiley, "'Lord, Save My Life' (Ps 116:4) as Generative Text for Jesus' Gethsemane Prayer (Mark 14:36a)," CBQ 48 (1986): 655–659, argues that "the early church has used Ps 116:4 to help shape Jesus' prayer in Mark 14:36a" (656). For a more nuanced discussion, see Pitre, Tribulation, 491–504.

34 David Daube, "A Prayer Pattern in Judaism," SE 1 (1959): 539–545, correctly identifies the three key elements of the prayer (acknowledgement, wish, surrender), as found in traditional Jewish prayer after the time of Jesus.
Mark’s Gethsemane prayer is composed of a prayer report (Mark 14:35) and the prayer itself (Mark 14:36) that are meant to be read as a whole. Two differences between the prayer report and the prayer should be noted: (1) the request of Jesus in the Markan prayer report is that "the hour pass him by" (παρέλθη, cf. 6:48; 13:30, 31) implying a passive involvement of God. The request in the prayer, however, is that the Father "remove (παρένεγκε) the cup" from Jesus, implying a more active involvement of God and hence a bolder request from Jesus. (2) The prayer of verse 36 expands the opening condition of the prayer report (εἰ δυνατὸν ἔστιν, v. 35) in two directions: (a) the δυνατὸν of the prayer report becomes an expression of

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### TABLE IV.1 THE GETHSEMANE PRAYER IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

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<tr>
<td>(i) Address</td>
<td>αββα ό πατήρ,</td>
<td>πάτερ μου,</td>
<td>πάτερ μου,</td>
<td>πάτερ</td>
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<td>(ii) Condition of Petition (Protasis)</td>
<td>εἰ δυνατόν ἔστιν</td>
<td>εἰ δυνατόν ἔστιν,</td>
<td>εἰ οὐ δύναται τοῦτο παρελθεῖν ἕαν μὴ αὐτὸ πίω,</td>
<td>εἰ δυνατόν ἔστιν,</td>
<td>εἰ οὐ δύναται τοῦτο παρελθεῖν ἕαν μὴ αὐτὸ πίω,</td>
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<td>(iii) Expression of Trust</td>
<td>πάντα δυνατά σοι</td>
<td>πάντα δυνατά σοι</td>
<td>παρελθάτω το ποτήριον τούτο ἀπ' ἐμοῦ</td>
<td>παρελθάτω το ποτήριον τούτο ἀπ' ἐμοῦ</td>
<td>παρένεγκε το το ἀνασκόλουθον το σον ἑλθείν</td>
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<td>(iv) Petition (Apodosis)</td>
<td>παρένεγκε το ποτήριον τοῦτο ἀπ' ἐμοῦ</td>
<td>παρένεγκε το ποτήριον τοῦτο ἀπ' ἐμοῦ</td>
<td>γεννηθῶ το θελημα σου</td>
<td>γεννηθῶ το θελημα σου</td>
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<td>(v) Qualifying Petition</td>
<td>ἄλλα ου τι έγχω θέλω ἄλλα τι σύ</td>
<td>πλην ου χως έγχω θέλω ἄλλα χως σύ</td>
<td>πλην μη το θελημα μου ἄλλα το σον γινέσθω</td>
<td>πλην μη το θελημα μου ἄλλα το σον γινέσθω</td>
<td>πλην μη το θελημα μου ἄλλα το σον γινέσθω</td>
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35 Brown, *The Death of Jesus*, 1:165; Donahue and Harrington, *Mark*, 408, note that this pattern of report followed by statement is found in Mark 14:33, 34 as well.
36 Matthew has removed the more direct verb (παρένεγκε, left in Luke 22:42) and used the indirect one (παρέλθη), again softening the impact of Jesus' request to the Father. Luke introduces the prayer with "if you are willing" (εἰ θελεῖ) and so blunts the edge of παρένεγκε.
confidence (πάντα δυνατά σοι, v. 36) in the prayer; and, (b) the εἰ of the prayer report is expanded into the final condition of the prayer (ἄλλας οὖ τί ἐγὼ θέλω ἄλλας τί σοῦ).

Simply put, the petition (v. 36) extends the prayer report (v. 35) in two opposite directions: Jesus has greater confidence in God ("all things are possible to you") and he has greater desire to submit his own wishes to God's. In Mark 10:27, Jesus has already declared that "all things are possible with God" (πάντα γὰρ δυνατὰ παρὰ τῷ θεῷ; Mark 9:23b, πάντα δυνατά τῷ πιστεύοντι). In 11:23, 24 Jesus uses the key term "all things" again in the context of a prayer promise (cf. 13:22). It was concluded in the previous chapter that for Jesus "all things are possible to the one who believes" (9:23) in the God who can do "all things." This conclusion was founded on the view that in Jesus (and, therefore, in those who believe) the kingdom of God is dynamically at work against spiritual opposition. The expression "all things are possible" is usually not so much a confession of God's almighty power (i.e., a statement of praise), as a faith-confession or plea of someone for whom there is no other help. In Mark 14:35–36, therefore, Jesus comes before his Father in a moment of extreme need beginning with a "faithful call upon God— who can create the miracle of assistance—with a confession of God's omnipotence, a real omnipotence which remains." Jesus is an ideal petitioner in Mark's Gospel, reinforcing the implications of the prayer promises of Mark that the disciples should pray as he does, especially under extreme pressure.

37 Matthew and Luke remove this statement of confidence, even though the earlier parallels to Mark 10:27 (par. Matt 19:26; Luke 18:27) and 11:24 (Matt 21:22) have been retained by them. In Matthew's version, Jesus' first petition is offered with both the condition and the overriding qualification. A second petition (Matt 26:42) assumes the truth of the first, placing it into the protasis, effectively rendering this second petition one of submission to God's will. According to Matthew, Jesus has firmly reached the answer of his petition by this time. Nolland, Luke, 3:1083–1084, notes that Luke's use of εἰ ὁ θεός εἰς δύναμις instead of εἰ δύνατόν ἐστίν is a stylistic variation and should not be understood as "please"; contra Fitzmyer, Luke, 2:1442.


39 Van Unnik, "'Alles ist dir möglich'," 36.
The prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:36) is composed of an address, a petition, and a qualification to that petition. The petition is a unique combination of expectation and submission and forms the focus of the treatment here.

b. Address
Jesus addresses God as "Abba Father" (αββα ὁ πατήρ), a title found only here in the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6).40 “Father” as an address of God in prayer is rare in Mark's Gospel being found again only at 11:25 (where it has the qualification, "in the heavens"). Indeed, πατήρ as a title for God is very rare in Mark when compared to Matthew and Luke. It occurs at Mark 8:38 (where it is the "Son of Man's" father), and 13:32 (where it is contrasted with "the Son"). There is only one occasion where the title "Father" is recommended for use by the disciples (11:25). With such a paucity of references to the "Father" in Mark, it is tempting to read the Pauline nuances (Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6) of the Gethsemane address (αββα ὁ πατήρ) back into Mark. However, the gospel's references to Jesus as the "Son" (οἱός) may fill the picture out a little as the presumption of the "Father" may also be made. With respect to the use of the title οἱός of Jesus in Mark, Jesus' baptism and transfiguration episodes are most important (Mark 1:11; 9:7; cf. 12:7), being programmatic for Jesus' mission in the gospel.41 To these uses of "son" may be connected the "Son of Man" sayings that speak of suffering or triumph over suffering (Mark 8:31; 9:12, 31; 10:33–34; 14:41). In sum, whereas "Father" in the Lord's Prayer and the prayer promises was primarily a title of promise and bold access, the Markan uses of "Son" imply that "Abba Father" is an address that directs readers to Jesus' mission and suffering. And yet the approachability found in the earlier examination of these titles cannot be excluded, as Jesus' Gethsemane request makes clear.

40 The Greek word πατήρ is not a translation of αββα; the whole phrase (αββα ὁ πατήρ) is an address. The address provides a clear recollection of Jesus' own prayer language retained by Christians as a connection to his prayer life and intimacy with the Father. See discussion in ch. II.C.3 above, and VIII.B.5 below. As an additional resource on the Gethsemane context of the address, see Brown, The Death of Jesus, 1:173–175.
41 J. A. Grassi, "Abba, Father (Mark 14:36): Another Approach," JAAR 50 (1982): 449–458. Other uses of "son" as a title in Mark are by those possessed by evil spirits (3:11; 5:7), by the writer (1:1), by the high priest (14:61, equated with χριστός), and by the centurion at the cross upon Jesus' final breath (15:39).
c. "The Hour" (Mark 14:35)

In the Markan prayer report Jesus requests the Father that, if it be possible, the "hour" (ὢρα) pass him by. The word ὢρα is used elsewhere in Mark to convey a time of imminent distress or trial. Mark 14:37 (par. Matt 26:40) uses it to refer to a short period of time (cf. Luke 23:44; Rev 18:10, 17, 19). The word is used in a transferred sense in verse 41, where Jesus exhorts the disciples to get up from their slumber because "the hour has come, behold the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." This "hour" climaxes Jesus' earlier predictions of the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Son of Man (Mark 8:31; 9:12, 31; 10:33–34; 14:21, and parallels). The Son of Man in Mark is a figure who carries divine authority (2:10; 2:28; 9:38; 14:62), but also one who must exercise his authority in the present age by being willing to be delivered into the "hands of sinners" (cf. Dan 7:25).

The disciples, however, have their own hour. In Mark 13:11, "hour" refers to the time when the disciples will bear witness in their own trials. Two eras are depicted in Mark 13, the "birth pangs" (v. 8; cf. Mark 13:5–13 [esp. v. 8] par. Matt 24:4–14; Luke 21:8–18; cf. John 16:21) and the Great Tribulation (v. 19), which will follow—a final and climactic period of unparalleled distress (Mark 13:15–23

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44 The same Christological title (ὁ άναξ οὗ ἄνθρωπος, Mark 8:31; 9:12, 31; 10:33–34; 14:21, and parallels), verb (παραδίδομαι, Mark 9:31; 10:33 [twice]; 14:21, and parallels), and indirect object (ἐίς καιρόν, 9:31) occur in both the passion predictions and Mark 14:41. "Hour" in Mark 14:35, 41 is similar to its uses in John's Gospel (2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:27; 13:1; 17:1), where Jesus has a specific obedience of God in mind that awaits him. It may also be equated with the divine necessity (δεῖ) referred to in the Synoptic passion predictions (Mark 8:31; 9:12, and parallels). Luke's Gospel uses δεῖ to convey the divine guidance (often predicted in the Scriptures) and therefore the certainty of outcome of Jesus' mission: 2:49; 4:43; 9:22; 11:42; 13:16, 33; 15:32; 17:25; 18:1; 19:5; 22:7, 37; 24:7, 26, 44, with the parallels to Mark underlined; cf. Matt 26:54.
45 Pitre, Tribulation, 482–484. See discussion in Holleran, Gethsemane, 57–66.
par. Matt 24:15–28 [esp. vv. 21, 29]; Luke 21:20–24) after which the Son of Man will come (Mark 13:24–27 par. Matt 24:29–31; Luke 21:25–28). All these events are "necessary" (δεί), that is, divinely willed (Mark 13:7; cf. Mark 8:31; 9:12). Prior to this extreme distress, the disciples will be "handed over" (παραδίδοθη, vv. 9, 11, 12) and tried in courts (Jewish and Gentile) "for his sake" (vv. 9, 13). They should not be anxious about speaking in that "hour" of trial, for it will be the Holy Spirit speaking and not them (v. 11). While the word ὥρα has a chronological reference here, the metaphorical meaning is not excluded (cf. Mark 14:41 par. Matt 26:45). In Mark 13:32, on the other hand, the "hour" refers to the time of the accomplishment of "all things" (v. 4), that is, the passing away of heaven and earth (v. 31; par. Matt 24:36, 44, 50; 25:13) following a series of cosmic events that will precede the coming of the Son of Man (in judgement; Mark 13:24–31; cf. 8:38; 2:10, 28). The disciples are again urged to be on guard for "you do not know when the time is" (βλέπετε, ἀγρυπνεῖτε· οὐκ οἶδατε γὰρ πότε ὁ καιρὸς ἐστιν). The "hour" (ὥρα) of verse 32 is in parallel with the "time" (καιρός) in verse 33, it is a definitive moment for the disciples and they must put all distractions aside and stay awake for it (γρηγορεῖτε; v. 37; cf. vv. 9, 23, 33, 35).

For an exhaustive treatment of the Great Tribulation in Mark 13, see Pitre, Tribulation, 219–379. On the origins of the Great Tribulation, see Pitre, Tribulation, 41–130. Jesus was not alone in predicting such a destruction; see Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 295–297, for other examples. Predictions of wars and spiritual deception are not uncommon in Jewish apocalyptic (e.g., T. Levi 15:1[?]; 16:4), and the depiction of seismic events and famines as figures of devastating judgement do not lack parallel within the Hebrew Bible (e.g., earthquakes, Jer 10:22; 23:19; 29:3; Zech 14:5; famines, Jer 14:16; 18:21; etc.; see Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 308, for details).

The structure of Mark 13 used here is that proposed by Moloney, Mark, 248–251; Gundry, Mark, 733, proposes a similar division. See Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 285–292, for a recent introduction to and bibliography on Mark 13. Recent major studies on Mark 13 (the main source for Matthew) include: George R. Beasley-Murray, Jesus and the Last Days: The Interpretation of the Olivet Discourse (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1993); K. D. Dyer, The Prophecy on the Mount: Mark 13 and the Gathering of the New Community (ITS 2; Bern: Peter Lang, 1998).

Other NT texts use ὥρα in a similar fashion (e.g., Matt 25:13; Rom 13:11; Rev 3:10; 14:7, 15). A possible background this and the wider NT uses of "hour" is the book of Daniel (LXX, see 8:17, 19; 11:35, 40, 45; cf. 12:1, 4), which speaks of "the time of the end" (( الوحى καιροῦ), a time of end-time distress for the people of God. As Eduard Schweizer, The Good News according to Mark (trans. Donald H. Madvig; London: SPCK, 1971), 312, summarises it: "What this passage [Mark 13:32] says is that in the midst of history that hour will strike which goes beyond all history." See also discussion in: Brown, The Death of Jesus, 1:167–168; Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 411–412; Garrett, Temptations, 92.
Jesus' "hour" of Mark 14:35 resonates with the future trials of the disciples. However, now Jesus requests that the "hour" pass him by (Mark 14:35). This hour refers not only to the impending moment of his death, but also to the eschatological hour that heralds the events surrounding the Great Tribulation, as inferred from the context of Mark 13. This is the hour of supreme testing for Jesus, when the "Son of Man" will be "handed over to sinners" (Mark 14:41). This "hour" is the kingdom of God come as judgement that has drawn near to Jesus to swallow him up. Jesus asks that this time would "pass him by." While the disciples are not mentioned in Jesus' prayer report, the "hour" is also the time in which they will be required to bear witness because they belong to Jesus as the Son of Man (cf. 13:9–13). As he senses himself being handed over on the cusp of the Great Tribulation, the disciples should know that their "time" of testing is near—but they do not pick up the clues.

d. "This Cup" (Mark 14:36 par. Matt 26:39, 42; Luke 22:41)
The heart of Jesus' Gethsemane request is that "this cup" be removed from him. Metaphorical uses of the word "cup" (ποτήριον) derive predominantly from the prophetic stream of the Old Testament where it usually refers to a punishment resulting from God's authoritative judgement on sin. Isaiah 51:17 provides a good example of this, where the prophet addresses Jerusalem as those "who have drunk from the hand of the LORD the cup of his wrath" (MT, אֲשֶׁר שָׁתִיתוּ מִיַּדְנוֹ הַנַּחֲלָה יְהוָה).

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52 Cranfield, "Cup," 137–139. See e.g., Ps 11:6; 75:8; Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15, 17, 28; 49:12; 51:7; Lam 4:21; Ezek 23:31, 32, 33; Hab 2:16; cf. Rev 14:8, 10, 17:(2), 4; 18:3, 6; and esp. 16:19; 19:15. See Goppelt, "πίνω, κτλ.," 6:151–152, and Holleran, *Gethsemane*, 26–29, for argument. In addition, see references to "drinking" the wrath of God in Job 21:20; Ps 60:3; Isa 63:6; Ob 16; cf. Rev 14:10; 16:19; 18:3. Goppelt, "πίνω, κτλ.," 6:150–151, indicates that the Passover ceremony of y. *Pesah* 10.37.c.5 had four cups corresponding to the four cups of punishment and the four cups of blessing. For "cup" as a symbol of God's authority to judge, see Ps. 75:7–8; Goppelt, "πίνω, κτλ.," 6:150. Uses of "cup of wrath" contemporary to Jesus are found in *Pss. Sol.* 8:14; 1QpHab 11.10–15.
Israel had been punished (in the exile) and now the LORD is about to remove their "cup of staggering, the bowl of my wrath" and put it into "the hand of your tormentors" (Isa 51:22; cf. Jer 25:15).

Many scholars have disputed that the cup referred to in Gethsemane or elsewhere in Jesus' sayings (e.g., Mark 10:38, 39; 14:23–24) is the cup of God's wrath. They cite a number of Targum sources, and one Jewish martyrology, which refer to "the cup of death" (or suffering).53 The Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah 5:11 (2nd c. B.C.–4th c. A.D.) is the clearest example of this meaning and uses "cup" to refer to Isaiah's cruel death (being sawn in two), which did not result from God's punishment.54 On this meaning, Jesus' cup is not a punishment, but "simply our Lord's destiny of suffering, sent indeed from God the Father, but not coming in the form of wrath."55 While this view of the "cup" is strongly held, it probably derives from the cup-as-God's wrath view and does not sufficiently discount it.56


54 It has been suggested by Goppelt, "πίνω, κτλ.," 152–153 n. 39, that this is a Christian use, however, it is not in a late section of the book. See M. A. Knibb, "Martyrdom and Ascension of Isaiah (Second Century B.C.–Fourth Century A.D.): A New Translation and Introduction," in The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (ed. James H. Charlesworth; vol. 2 of; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983-1985), 149–150., for details. Brown, The Death of Jesus, 2:169–170, argues that the "cup" as suffering leading to death is also behind the idea of "tasting death" (e.g., IV Ezra 6:26; Heb 2:9, John 8:52). He thinks that in Mark 10:38, 39 "cup" refers to suffering for proclaiming the gospel. He notes in support that the tense of the verb "to drink" is present (πίνω) and so Jesus is already drinking the cup. Brown has a somewhat wooden understanding of aspect in Greek verbs. Even contextually, such a meaning makes the challenge of Jesus to the disciples insipid since Jesus' actual suffering at this point is one that they could have endured more easily than that which was to come. Furthermore the climax of the unit (v. 45, "a ransom for many") loses its power. The present tense is prophetic and refers to the cup that Jesus is required to drink: "Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?" Cranfield, "Cup," 137–139, says that in Mark 10:38, 39 "cup" is used in a "weakened sense" with reference to the disciples.

55 Hanson, Wrath, 127.

56 Garrett, Temptations, 105, states that the likelihood of the "wrath of God" concept being completely excluded from Jesus' use of "cup" by early readers is remote.

Brown, The Death of Jesus, 1:170, also agrees that all residue of wrath cannot be
The overall evidence, therefore, favours the view that "cup" in the Gethsemane prayer is a metaphor for God's righteous punishment of evil, particularly to be associated with the moment of extreme testing in the Great Tribulation rather than fate.  

Jesus' request for the removal of the cup, therefore, is a request that a horror—ultimately from the divine hand—be removed from him. It is difficult to think of anything, other than God's judgement, that would convey the horror of the "final ordeal" encapsulated in the metaphor of the "hour" of verse 35 and that led to Jesus' display of extreme anxiety (vv. 33–34). However, like the previous word ("hour"), "cup" also has earlier uses in Mark to be considered before determining the precise request Jesus makes in Gethsemane.
i. "This [Cup] Is My Blood" (Mark 14:24)

At the Last Supper Jesus takes "the cup" and gives it to his disciples saying "this [cup] is my blood of the covenant which has been poured out on behalf of many" (τοῦτο ἐστιν τὸ αἵμα μου τῆς διαθήκης τὸ ἐκχυσμένον ὑπὲρ πολλῶν, Mark 14:24 par. Matt 26:26; Luke 22:17, 18, 20).59 This declaration is matched by an earlier one in verse 22, with which it must be connected: "Take, this is my body" (λάβετε, τοῦτο ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου, Mark 14:22 par. Matt 26:26 [adds the imperative "eat"]; Luke 22:19; cf. 1 Cor 11:24).60 "My body" (τὸ σῶμά μου) is probably shorthand for "myself" or "my person" rather than "my flesh" or "my corpse." 61 Jesus, in this (prophetic and performative) action, is giving himself (or his "life") to the disciples, (cf. 8:34–37). 62 The breaking and distributing of the bread

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59 The secondary material on the origin, traditions, and significance of the Lord's/Last Supper is substantial. The following survey has been culled from commentaries in the main. For extensive bibliography see: Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 379–385; Nolland, Matthew, 1069–1071. While scholarship is generally agreed that the Last Supper was founded by Jesus, it is divided over whether the Last Supper is a reinterpretation/re-application of the Passover meal (Pesah) held on the evening of 14/15 Nisan or a reinterpretation of an earlier meal held in Passover week. For argument that the Last Supper was joined to the Passover seder, see Joachim Jeremias, The Eucharistic Words of Jesus (trans. Norman Perrin; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 15–86; I. Howard Marshall, Last Supper and Lord's Supper (Exeter/Grand Rapids, Mich.: Paternoster/Eerdmans, 1981); Peter Stuhlmacher, "Jesus' Readiness to Suffer and His Understanding of His Death," in The Historical Jesus in Recent Research (SBTS; ed. James D. G. Dunn and Scot McKnight; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 398–412. See McKnight, Jesus and His Death, 253–258, 259–273, for an outline of the view that there is "little substantial argument for the last Supper being a Pesah" (270), but that Jesus turned his meal into "a new kind of Pesah" (272). The main difference between the views—for purposes of the present chapter—is that the sacrificial imagery of Pesah would not be as strongly present at the meal (because no lamb had been taken to the priests for slaying and flaying, and no blood had been daubed on the doorframe).

60 Luke 22:19 and 1 Cor 11:24 add, "which is [given (Luke)] for you, do this in remembrance of me." Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 389–391, concurs with David Daube, He That Cometh (London: London Diocesan Council for Christian and Jewish Understanding, 1966), 6–14, that Jesus is referring to a broken piece, the apikhoman—set aside for the Messiah in m. Pesah 10:8—as a sign to them that he is the Messiah. McKnight, Jesus and His Death, 251 n. 19, argues that this tradition is of uncertain origin and should not be attributed to the time of Jesus.


62 Stuhlmacher, "Jesus' Death," 404. It has been suggested that the "breaking" of the bread signifies a prediction of a violent death. Paul's reference to "one bread" (1 Cor 10:17, an early tradition) implies a single loaf from which parts were broken off for all twelve disciples. This action does not so much convey violence as participation

The declaration over the cup in Mark 14:24 may be broken into two parts for convenience, "my blood of the covenant poured out" and "on behalf of many." The "pouring out" or "shedding" of blood is frequently associated with murder or violent death in the Scriptures (e.g., Matt 23:30, 35 par. Luke 11:50–51; 27:4, 24, 25; Rom 3:15; Heb 12:4; Rev 6:10–11; 16:6–7; 17:6; 18:24; 19:2). "My blood" is occasionally used to refer to a prospective violent death of the speaker (e.g., 1 Sam

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64 Stuhlmacher, "Jesus' Death," 401, 403–404. Perhaps another way to see the breaking of bread is that Jesus is distributing his "inheritance" to his disciples (i.e., his gift to them) as part of a "farewell speech" (e.g., Gen 49:1–33) while he is alive. See ch. VI.B.1 below for more details on the "farewell speech (or testament)" genre. It is not the intention of this comment to declare the Last Supper a "farewell speech" (though Luke's pre-trial passion narrative does bear similarities), but that in this context, Jesus, aware of his imminent departure, gathers his disciples in a similar manner to others within the period. McKnight, Jesus and His Death, 280–281, argues for an association with the "bread of affliction" (Deut 16:3): "Jesus, obviously captured by the meaning of suffering in Egypt as an analogy of his impending death, states that his body is this bread of affliction. [...] His suffering will lead to an exodus, a redemption not unlike that of the children of Israel. [...] Jesus saw the exodus affliction as a prototype of the Final Ordeal into which he was about to enter." Here McKnight seems to infer that Jesus' meal is a Passover, a view which he has earlier dismissed (McKnight, Jesus and His Death, 253–258, 259–273).
65 After the main meal (δείπνησα, Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25) and most likely the third of four Passover cups. To state the obvious, the demonstrative pronoun (τοῦτο) refers to the cup (including its contents) and not merely the wine within the cup (for which a masculine pronoun would be required, a point made clear in Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25).
66 F. Laubach, George R. Beasley-Murray, and H. Bietenhard, "Blood, Sprinkle, Strangled," NIDNTT 1: 221–222. This paragraph has benefited from the excellent summary of issues found in Nolland, Matthew, 1078–1084.
The "pouring out" of blood is also connected to the sacrificial slaughter of animals within the Mosaic legislation (e.g., Lev 4:7, 18, 25, 30, 34). Significantly, in Exodus 24:8 sacrificial blood is associated with the affirmation of "the covenant" on Mount Sinai (the "blood of the covenant"). In Zechariah 9:11 the expression "blood of my covenant" is used. It functions as part of a post-exilic promise of the eschatological liberation of God's persecuted people. That is, the prospect of a renewed covenant within a renewed messianic kingdom under the LORD is on view (cf. v. 9; cf. Ezek 16:59–63; Jer 31:31–34). Jesus' use of the phrase "the blood of the covenant" over the cup in Mark 14:23–24 also suggests a covenant is being renewed or established. If so, a renewed community is also on

67 Nolland, Matthew, 1078.
69 […] λαβὸν δὲ Μωυσῆς τὸ αἷμα κατεσκέδασεν τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐπεν Ἰδοὺ τὸ αἷμα τῆς διασθήκης, "and Moses took the blood and scattered it over the people and said, 'Behold, the blood of the covenant'." Robert H. Stein, "Last Supper," DJG: 448, notes that Tg. Ps.-J. and Tg. Onq. on Exod 24:8 see the covenant blood as "being given to 'atone' for the sins of the people—as being expiatory in nature."
70 Jesus' message of renewal (e.g., Mark 2:21–22), his choosing of twelve disciples, and his critique of leadership and temple ministrations, suggest national renewal as one of his aims. If so, then the concept of a "new" covenant may also have been present in Jesus' intent in v. 24 (particularly in light of the following verse [Mark 14:25 par. Matt 26:29]). The new covenant and covenant renewal were also important at Qumran (CD 6:19; 8:21; 19:33–34; 20:1–2; 1QpHab 2:1–4[?]; 1Q28b 3:25–26[?]; 5:21–23[?]; 1Q34 3 ii 5–6[?]). For further discussion, see Robert F. O'Toole, "Last Supper," ABD 4: 238–239. McKnight, Jesus and His Death, 293–321, is not persuaded that the covenant concept belongs in the "cup-saying." He argues that it was introduced by early Christian teaching on the Lord's Supper in light of the OT, possibly beginning at Pentecost. He suggests that Pesah was not connected with the covenant (or covenant renewal) in biblical or post-biblical sources, and that Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom—the flagship of his ministry—is also never connected with the covenant. According to McKnight, Jesus did not speak of "covenant" in the cup-saying but only of "the pouring out" of his blood. McKnight's method is reductionistic; he permits only one possible OT precursor for the cup-saying and then searches for the one text that contains most of the four elements of the saying (blood, covenant, poured out, and "for many"; see esp. 304–306). Since no one text can be found he concludes that the Last Supper—for which he follows the Johannine dating (one day earlier than the Pesah that year)—was a Pesah anticipation in which the disciples, through ingesting the bread and wine, become protected from the day of YHWH (338–339). McKnight's presupposition about what constitutes valid intertextuality restricts his conclusions. If a wider net is cast more complex and embracing solutions arise. Another presupposition of McKnight is that Gospels sayings only become longer not shorter. This view has already been treated in ch. II.B above; cf. Dunn, Jesus Remembered, 173–254; Stuhlmacher, "Jesus' Death," 404. There were fixed and variable portions in oral
view, an idea reinforced if the disciples are partaking of Jesus' own bread and cup at the meal.71

tradition and determination of "original" elements is not as simple as counting up words. A good case for the originality of the word and theme of "covenant" is found in Nolland, *Matthew*, 1080–1082.

71 It is more than likely that the cup that he gives to them at that moment is the one he has used throughout the evening. Having drunk from his own cup (most likely the third cup of the Passover), Jesus gives it to the disciples to drink and invests it with the interpretation outlined above. It also makes good sense that in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus is referring to the cup he drank and shared with the disciples at the Passover meal. There is no small discussion on whether Jesus partook of the Last Supper cup. Some take Mark 14:25 as a vow of abstinence from "the fruit of the vine" that implies Jesus' non-participation. Another argument for his abstinence is that he does not appear to partake of the bread he broke for them (v. 22). However, Jesus' partaking of the (third) cup in the Passover is actually implied by his statement in Mark 14:25, that he "shall not drink again (οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ πίω) from the fruit of the vine." The key word οὐκέτι is contested in the textual tradition. It is supported by A B f 113 Μ lat sy sa and omitted by Ρ C L W Ψ. The whole clause is amended to οὐ μὴ προσθῶ πίπειν in D. Matthew redrafts it to οὐ μὴ πίω ἀπ' ἄρτῳ, which also implies Jesus has drunk from the cup. According to Jeremias, Eucharistic, 182, Mark's accumulation of negatives (οὐκέτι οὐ μὴ) is a form of "barbaric Greek," which probably reflects clumsiness in the translation of the Semitic tradition handed down from Jesus. He argues (110–111, 208–218) that Jesus—under a vow of abstinence—did not drink from the cup he distributed to the disciples. He bases his view primarily upon a reading of the Markan tradition of the Last Supper through the Lukan tradition (esp. Luke 22:15–18). The "long" version of the Lukan Lord's Supper (Luke 22:17–20) is regarded as original by Jeremias, Eucharistic, 138–159, the "short" version (Luke 22:17–19a) by McKnight, Jesus and His Death, 260–261 n. 4. According to Evans, Mark 8:27–16:20, 395, the Lukan tradition seems to refer to Jesus' non-participation in the Passover as a whole, after he has declared his desire to eat it with them. In Mark 14:25 (par. Matt 26:29) the vow of abstinence follows the taking, blessing, and giving of the cup, and the disciples' subsequent participation in the cup, and seems to refer to an expectation of hope after suffering. Based on a survey of the early Christian Passover rites Jeremias, Eucharistic, 216–217, concludes that Jesus' fast has to do with his prayer for "the guilt of the [Jewish] people" (217). Jeremias' (199) concludes that it is "very unlikely that Jesus himself should have eaten of the bread that he referred to as his body, or drunk of the wine that he referred to as his blood." However, he provides no support; presumably readers are to think it illogical (or abhorrent?) that Jesus would drink of his own "blood." Is it not possible that, at the Last Supper, the "cup" has two referents, the cup of the Passover/Covenant renewal, which Jesus is about to reinterpret (Mark 14:24 par. Matt 26:28) and the cup given him by the Father to drink (cf. Mark 10:38, 39 par. Matt 20:22, 23, see below), which he later requests to be taken from him? The two ideas are, of course, inseparable; the original covenant confirmed Israel's status as God's people and obligated their obedience. The shedding of blood symbolized the commitment of both parties.

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The second part of the cup saying uses the preposition "on behalf of" (ὑπὲρ) to state the relationship (either as representative or substitute) of "my blood of the covenant poured out" and those for or to whom it is directed (the "many"). The substitution or representation of a human being for others using sacrificial terminology is not uncommon in pertinent Jewish literature.

Isaiah 53:10, as a key example, speaks of the "servant's" life being made (by God?) a "sin offering" (אָשָׁם, בְּשָׁם). Recent scrutiny of the term 'āšām in the Hebrew Bible has concluded that it does not refer to a sacrifice per se (i.e., "guilt offering" or "sin offering" found in most English translations), but to an "obligation arising from guilt," and hence to the "wiping out of guilt/debt" that the 'āšām effects. Moreover, within the Isaiah context the sacrifice of the Servant is not intended to be repeated, but to deal with guilt once for all.

The beneficiaries of the "pouring out" are the "many" (πολλῶν; cf. Mark 10:45 par. Matt 20:28). The same word is also used for the beneficiaries of the Servant's ministry in Isaiah 53:12 and is probably intentionally echoed in Mark 14:24.

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72 Matt 26:28 uses περί instead of ὑπὲρ but then adds εἰς ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν, a phrase which connotes the purpose of the pouring out.
74 A number of the contributors in Bernd Janowski and Peter Stuhlmacher, eds., The Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 in Jewish and Christian Sources (Grand Rapids, Mich./Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2004), make this point (3, 28, 37, 65–70, 152). Four Maccabees 6:28–29 and 17:21–22 have also been suggested as potential sources of sacrificial language, but these texts more than likely look back to Isaiah 53. See the extended discussion of the substitutionary martyr "trajectory" in Wright, Victory, 576–611, esp. 579–584. The LXX of Isaiah 53:10 places the audience as the ones who have to make a sacrifice (ἐὰν δῶτε περί ἁμαρτίας) and so has interpreted the MT. See David E. Sapp, "The LXX, 1QIsa, and MT Versions of Isaiah 53 and the Christian Doctrine of the Atonement," in Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins (ed. William. H. Bellinger, Jr. and William R. Farmer; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 1998), 170–192, for further comparisons between the two text traditions.
75 Nolland, Matthew, 1081, "An echo of 'a ransom for many' in [Matt] 20:28 is probably intended in 'poured out for many' [Matt 26:28]."
76 καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν, further defined as "for their sins" [LXX only, MT "for transgressors"], a theme taken up by Matthew 26:28, εἰς ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. MT of Isa 53:12bc says that the Servant: [...] poured out himself to death.
10:45 also uses the word "many" as the object of the mission of Son of Man who came to serve and "to give his life as a ransom for many" (δοσις γινεται την ψυχην αυτου λυτρον αντι πολλων). "Ransom" (λυτρον) language in the New Testament is dominated by the related noun ἁπολυτρωσεις (Luke 21:28; Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7, 14; 4:30; Col 1:14; Heb 9:15; 11:35). The verb λυτρον is rare in the New Testament (Luke 24:21; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 1:18) and the noun λυτρον occurs only in Mark 10:45 (and in the parallel text Matt 20:28). It refers simply to a price paid for release. One of its equivalents in the Hebrew Bible (Heb. כֹּפֶר, כְּפֶר) is occasionally used to refer to a financial payment made by an offender in the place of another penalty (e.g., Exod 21:30). In Isaiah 43:3–4, for example, the Lord declares to exiled Israel that guilty nations will provide a sufficient ransom to

and was numbered with transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many
and made intercession for the transgressors.
(NRSV, emphasis added)


78 BDAG, 605, λυτρον.
bring them home from their place of punishment. Thus, the Lord will provide another who will take their place and pay their debt with their lives.  

This understanding of kòphér—termed a "substitution of existence," or a "life equivalent" (Ger. Existenzstellvertretung)—has been proposed as conceptual background for Mark 10:45 and therefore Mark 14:24. In view of the imminent eschatological ordeal, Jesus proposes that the Son of Man will "give his life" as a ransom in exchange for (ἄντί, Mark 10:45) the lives of the "many" (cf. Mark 8:36–37; cf. Ps 49:7–9). "Acting on God's behalf, [Jesus] was prepared to die, making his life the divinely appointed ransom for the salvation of 'the many' [i.e., the guilty among Israel]."

To sum up: the "cup" in Mark 14:24 is inseparable from the bread distributed with it. Together they point to a violent and sacrificial death of the speaker and to the establishment of a future community with him. "My blood" has legal, sacrificial, covenantal, and Passover links, without one metaphor dominating. The "cup" Jesus wishes to be taken from him in the garden of Gethsemane, therefore, refers not only to his own violent death as a divine rejection (cf. Mark 15:34), but perhaps also to the benefits it will obtain for those who have transgressed against God and have no way back without the establishment of a new or renewed covenant.

Participation in Jesus' cup by the disciples, however, not only grants them its benefits, but also commits them to willingly suffer similar violence for the kingdom of God (cf. Mark 8:34–38; 9:40; 10:30, 38, 39; 13:9–13; 14:27 and parallels; Matt 11:12 par. Luke 16:16; cf. John 12:24–26). The "Son of Man" not only takes their place (Mark 10:45), but, in his absence, they will take his place (13:5–13, 30–32). The union between Jesus and the disciples in the hour of distress lies at the heart of

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79 These verses are omitted from the analysis of Pitre, Tribulation, 404–417. Stuhlmacher, "Jesus' Death," 396, shows how the "life-replacement" imagery is carried forward into segments of late Second Temple Judaism (e.g., 1Q34bis Frag. 3 col. I, lines 5–6).


the other cup-saying in Mark's Gospel that provides vital background for the exegesis of the Gethsemane prayer of Jesus.

ii. "Can You Drink My Cup?" (Mark 10:38, 39)

The other pertinent use of the word "cup" in Mark's Gospel occurs in chapter 10. Verses 38 and 39 parallel the metaphors of "cup" and "baptism." Generally speaking, the imagery of "baptism" implies a third party who performs the act. For example, Luke 12:50, uses the "divine" passive: "I have a baptism with which to be baptised" (NRSV, emphasis added; βαπτισθηναι). The link between Mark 10:38–39 and Luke 12:49–50 is more significant still, as is evident from their related pairs: cup–baptism in Mark and fire–baptism in Luke (cf. Gos. Thom. 10). The imagery of "fire" and "baptism" also feature in John the Baptist's own preaching (Matt 3:10; cf. Luke 13:6–9), particularly in his depiction of the ministry of the "one coming after me" (Luke 3:16; cf. Matt 3:11–12; Mark 1:8). In John's preaching, "fire" (and probably "baptism") refer to a cleansing about to take place through a final ordeal of judgement (Matt 3:7–10 par. Luke 3:7–9). In Jewish prophetic and apocalyptic literature, this ordeal immediately precedes the age of renewal (Dan 12:1–3; Mal 3:2–3).

In Mark 10:38, 39 and Luke 12:50, a similar eschatological framework is

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84 Baptism is not a religious rite here but akin to being drowned (e.g., Pss 9:16: 18:4, 5; 42:7; 69:1–3 [LXX 68:3, Sym βαπτίζειν], 15; Job 9:31 [Aq. βαπτίζειν]; 22:11; Isa 43:2; Jon 2:3–6; cf. Isa 21:4 LXX uses βαπτίζειν). Of these texts, Bolt, The Cross, 68–69, suggests that Psalm 69 is a key for Mark (compare Ps 69:22 and Mark 15:23, 36), directing readers to see Jesus' passion through its lens. A number of other parallels (e.g., God's "hiding of his face," cf. Deut 31:17–18; 32:20–22; Pss 27:9; 88:14–16; 102:2, 10, results from his anger and may point to an imminent punishment).


86 Dunn, Jesus Remembered, 802. Matthew only has the cup saying, which may testify to three sayings originally. Compare Matt 10:34 and Luke 12:51. See McKnight, Jesus and His Death, 124–129, for summary of discussion on Mark 10:38, 39.

87 Dunn, Jesus Remembered, 1:364–369, esp. 368–369.

88 Allison, End of the Ages, 6–24.
employed, but one in which Jesus portrays himself in the judgement of the Great Tribulation.\textsuperscript{89} When in Mark 10:38–39 Jesus speaks of a "cup" that he is about to drink, he employs the prophetic use of "cup," injecting it with heightened eschatological meaning. He does not portray this as a cup of his choice, but one which is already underway and moving to an inevitable conclusion. Jesus speaks of a time reserved for him that will eventually consume him. Moreover, all the disciples (not only James and John) will drink from this same cup and be baptised with this same baptism if they look for reward in the kingdom of God at work in Jesus (Mark 10:39–40; cf. Acts 12:2).\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{89} Pitre, \textit{Tribulation}, 401–402, argues that the life of "an anointed one" of Daniel 9:26 ends with "a flood," and hence Jesus' use of "baptism" here. The words in question (ῥικησ, ἐςπετο) could just as easily be translated "and it [i.e., the city/holy place will come to an end] in a flood," given the following mentions of "war" and "desolations" in the following clauses (so, NRSV, ESV).

In Luke 12:49 Jesus speaks of his own ministry or mission (ἡλθον, "I have come") as casting fire upon the earth, wishing it already kindled. But in Luke 12:50, which is syntactically parallel to verse 49, Jesus puts himself on the other side of the ledger as the one undergoing baptism/fire. In the subsequent verses, the thrust of the unit returns to the divisive nature of his ministry, almost as if verse 50 was misplaced. Now if, in Luke 12:50 and Mark 10:38, 39, "cup," "fire," and "baptism" are parallel terms for the outpouring of God's judgement, then not only is the earlier analysis of "cup" as symbolic of God's wrath confirmed, but the imagery probably narrows it down again to the Great Tribulation, or at the least a time of great distress. See Allison, \textit{End of the Ages}, 124–128; Delling, "\textit{Baptisma}," 101; Pitre, \textit{Tribulation}, 394–396, for details.

\textsuperscript{90} A number of prayer echoes are found in this brief exchange (Mark 10:35–37): (1) the language that James and John use in making their request of Jesus uses \textit{prayer} language. "Ask," "do," and "whatever," are frequent members of prayer instructions within and outside the Synoptic Gospels (e.g., Matt 7:7, 8 par. Luke 11:9, 10; Mark 11:24 par. Matt. 21:22; James 1:5, 6; 1 John 3:22; 5:14, 15–16). (2) In prefacing their request with "we want" (θέλω) James and John show the opposite motive to Jesus in Gethsemane (οὸ τί ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλὰ τί σύ); and (3) in response to the pair's request, Jesus asks them whether they are \textit{able} to drink the "cup" that he is to drink or to be baptised with the baptism with which he is to be baptised (Mark 10:38 par. Matt 20:39). The use of the δυν- stem activates the earlier discussions of Jesus with the disciples and others about the relationship of miracles, faith and the kingdom of God (e.g., Mark 9:22–24, 28–29; 10:26, 27) as well as the fig tree miracle and its related prayer promise (11:12–14, 20–25). Perhaps a subtle message in the exchange of Mark 10:38–45 is that God—through his kingdom at work in his Son—is the only one who is \textit{able} to achieve the work of salvation. What the disciples need is a faith that is willing to give up one's life (8:34–38). This is the very thing Jesus conveys in speaking about the "cup" he will drink.
iii. Conclusion

The above investigation has demonstrated, firstly, that the "cup" Jesus requests be removed from him in Mark 14:36 refers to the judgement of God that would be poured out at the Great Tribulation or final ordeal. To face such a thing would be overwhelmingly horrendous (cf. Mark 15:34 par. Matt 27:36). The request encompasses the belief on Jesus' part that he was making a sacrificial giving of himself that would take the place of and remove the punishment from "many" and then establish them with him in a new community and perhaps within a new covenant. He requests his Father to remove the cup given to him to achieve the salvation purposes of the kingdom of God within a messianic mission, a mission he has already accepted (Mark 1:9–11; 9:7, etc.). He asks this of the Father because he knows that "all things are possible" for him (Mark 10:27; 11:23–24; cf. 9:23). Jesus hoped that he would, in the Father's power and goodness, be spared what he was about to face. This is not a step of disobedience or doubt, for he confesses God's ability to do all things, even that which he himself cannot conceive. It is rather the moment of extreme pressure and anxiety of what he is about to face that leads him to seek another way. This vulnerability is muted in Matthew's and especially in Luke's accounts.

The uniqueness of the situation must in some way modify how the qualification that follows in the second half of verse 36 ("not what I want, but what you want") is taken. Jesus is requesting that the commission given him by the Father be taken back. Readers of Mark already know of Jesus' awareness that this is a divinely appointed task (1:9–11; 2:20; 8:31; 9:7, 12, 31; 10:33–34; 14:8, 27) and will, to that extent, be surprised by this request. However, there have been enough hints (e.g., 10:38) of his anxiety over the future to indicate the ingenuousness of his prayer. Jesus' conflict in Gethsemane reflected his inner conflict over his mission.

A second point may also be offered: although the "cup" in the Garden of Gethsemane is one that Jesus alone must drink, the disciples' earlier participation in the Last Supper cup (14:23–24) along with Jesus' prediction of their consumption of the cup of suffering (10:39) signifies their own participation in his suffering along with the celebration of a future reward in the kingdom of God (14:25). It is for this reason that he warns them to be alert at this time (14:34, 37–38, 41). Just as he is being tested to turn aside from the course laid down for him, so they will be likewise pressured to do so. The implication from this is that Jesus' exhortation to pray
(14:37) is not delivered for this time alone, but for their future testing or "baptism." They now have Jesus' example of asking the Father to remove their "cup" as a valid way of responding at that time.

e. "Not What I Want But What You Want" 91

Having spent the majority of the chapter determining just what it is that Jesus asked for in Gethsemane it is now time to turn to the matter of the qualification he places upon his petition. As indicated in the opening paragraphs of the chapter, the Gethsemane prayer marks a clear limitation upon petitionary prayer. The issue, however, is not that Jesus makes a qualification to his request—such a condition was already forecast in the Lord's Prayer—but rather what it means in this climactic context.

The condition reads: "but not what I want but what you [want]" (NRSV; ὁδὲ ἐγὼ θέλω ὁδὲλλὰ τί σοῦ, Mark 14:36d par. Matt 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42). The condition is not a separate petition intended to stand on its own, but a rider on the main petition for the removal of the cup. 92 The condition centres on what each party "wants" or "wills" and captures the tension of all petitionary prayer. 93 As indicated in the study of the third petition in the Lord's Prayer (ch. II.C.4.c), the will of God combines both individual–moral and salvation plan aspects, with the latter having the prominence. Mark, followed by Matthew, conveys Jesus' active choosing of the will of God through the present tense θέλω. 94 The actual request is offered (as usual) in the aorist tense (παρένεγκε, and Luke; Matt παρελθὼν), but the willingness to

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92 The absence of a main verb in this clause makes for awkward reading. Luke 22:42 and Matthew 26:42 turn it fully into a petition by the addition of γενηθήτω, perhaps reflecting the Lord's Prayer (so, Holleran, Gethsemane, 30–31). See Taylor, St Mark, 554, for discussion. Both Taylor and Dowd, Prayer, 133, 156, affirm the translation of H. B. Swete, The Gospel according to St Mark (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1956), 344, "However, the question is, not what is my will […]"). This turns the petition into a soliloquy (cf. John 12:27–28), and robs it of its emotional freight.
93 Note the use of the emphatic ἐγὼ and σοῦ. The relationship of God's will and prayer is not only found in the Lord's Prayer, but also in Paul (e.g., Rom 1:10; 15:32), the Johannine literature (e.g., 1 John 3:14), etc.
94 Porter, Verbal Aspect, 351.
submit to God's will is open-ended; it conveys Jesus' overall attitude. Jesus' resolution to do God's will is sealed by asking three times (cf. 2 Cor 12:8).\footnote{Mark mentions two occasions when Jesus prays (14:35–36, 39), and a third may be presumed from 14:41. Matthew is more specific, 26:39, 42, 44. Luke mentions only one prayer session (22:42). To pray three times about something is to be assured of a final decision in the heavenly court; see Gerhard Delling, "τρεῖς, κτλ.," TDNT 8: 216–225; cf. Victor Paul Furnish, 2 Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB 32A; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 529.}

The phrase the "will of God" is not common in Mark. Mark 3:35 contains the only specific reference to the phrase: "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother" (cf. 10:29, 30). Here "will" may be limited to the "moral" will of God, but other Markan uses of the verb "to will" or "want" point beyond this. In Mark 8:34–38, for example, the disciples are exhorted to sacrifice their lives in the here and now in order to regain them (and much more) before God on the day of the Son of Man. To live in such a "way" is an application of what it means to have one's mind on the "things of God" and not on the "things of men" (Mark 8:33). Living this way will lead to "wanting" (θέλειν; 9:35; 10:35; 10:42–44) to give up one's exalted position and take the form of a servant, as the Son of Man does (Mark 10:45), rather than acting in the way of worldly leaders (10:42–44). Jesus' own obedience and his calling others to obedience is of one cloth. To follow him is to go in the way of God's will (3:35), including the willingness to lose one's life for the gospel and for his sake.\footnote{Note δεῖ in Mark 8:31, and, by inference, the parallel verses in 9:12, 31 and 10:33–34. Heil, Death and Resurrection, 44–45, draws attention to the sonship/discipleship motifs found in the parallel verse in Matt 26:39.}


In continuity with the first part of the Gethsemane prayer, the source of this second part may also be Isaiah 53:10: "Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain […] through him the will of the LORD shall prosper" (NRSV, emphasis added; LXX, καὶ κύριος βούλεται καθαρίσαι αὐτὸν τῆς πληγῆς […] καὶ βούλεται κύριος ἀφελεῖν; MT, יְהֹוָה יִכְרַהְיָל דָּוִד לְיַעַף […] יְהֹוָה יִכְרַהְיָל).
It has already been noted above that the "will of the LORD" prospers through the Servant's making himself an 'āšām. The thrust of Isaiah 40–55 is that God has purposed to deliver his people from exile and to bring them back to Jerusalem (44:28 [26]; 46:10; 48:14; 55:11). Jesus requests that this divine purpose be fulfilled (for the "many") though his drinking the "cup" rather than that he be released from it.

The condition attached to Jesus' Gethsemane prayer reinforces the individual and salvation-plan aspects of God's will found in the earlier example from the Lord's Prayer. Jesus requests of the Father that—even in this moment of extreme anguish and horror—it be not his own desires, but those of the Father that prevail. This conclusion did not prevent him from offering a heartfelt petition that—perhaps in his ignorance of the Father's plans (cf. Mark 13:32)—another way than that to which he has already agreed might be found. Once again, the prayer of Jesus sets the path of

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98 Dan 7 is considered by many to be the most influential text upon Jesus' understanding of his death (e.g., McKnight, Jesus and His Death, 338), but, again, a combination of sources is more likely than one source in such matters.
99 Spieckermann, "Vicarious Suffering," 8, says that the stem ָּלפְּן should not be translated "plan" but "will" or "the LORD chose" to maintain the personal involvement of the LORD with the Servant. Janowski, "Servant," 66–67, on the other hand, emphasizes the "plan" of God, since it is the salvation of Israel—and of the nations—that is involved in this part of Isaiah. There is a scriptural and Jewish tradition on the interposing of a request to turn God away from a stated intention, sometimes with success (e.g., Exod. 33:12–23; 2 Kgs 20:1–6), and sometimes with acceptance of God doing the opposite of what is requested (e.g., 2 Sam 15:25–26; 1 Macc 3:58–60).
100 Dowd, Prayer, 133–150, 151–162, has proposed a different background to this part of the prayer of Jesus in Gethsemane. She argues: (1) Mark is writing to a Christian community who are situated within a world which has already formed ideas on the questions of miracles and theodicy (i.e., the relationship of suffering and divine power), two questions that feature prominently on the Markan landscape and that have drawn a variety of explanations; (2) this community will be (or is being) tempted to turn away from its present suffering (e.g., 4:17; 8:34–35; 10:30, 39; 13:9–13) and focus on the performing of miracles as a demonstration of its legitimacy; (3) rather than critique miracles, the writer of Mark affirms them as "God's will" and uses the Gethsemane episode to show that neither God's power ("all things are possible") nor God's will ("your will be done," whether miracles or suffering) can be minimised in Christian discipleship and must be held in tension; and, (4) prayer functions as the means whereby the community's existence as "empowered sufferers" may be expressed. "However much they may have to suffer," says Dowd, "they are not to retreat from their world-view; they are not to stop expecting God to intervene on their behalf." Apart from the heavy use of mirror reading, Dowd fails to account for the place of the Son of Man sayings which look beyond the crucifixion to the resurrection (as well as the inference in Mark 14:25 to the same effect).
the disciples who will likewise be tested to trust God outside of their own knowledge of his plans.

C. Conclusions from Jesus' Prayer in Gethsemane

The prayer of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane is an example of both confidence as well as self-limitation in petitionary prayer. Jesus is confident enough before God to ask that the divine plan of salvation, a plan to which he had consented, be performed without his participation. His distress is reflected in his threefold prayer. And yet he offered this prayer seeking what God wanted and not what he wanted. In this way Jesus is presented as an ideal petitioner and an ideal believer. When faced with a choice over the things of God versus the things of human beings, Jesus chooses the former (Mark 8:32–33; cf. 14:35b). Indeed, this internal conflict—which is part of all prayer and reflects the "already–not yet" nature of the kingdom—is the first point that should be noted from the examination of this petition.

The second thing to note is how Jesus is set amidst his disciples. Whereas the Markan prayer promises (9:14–29; 11:22–25) portray a hierarchical relationship between Jesus and the disciples, the Garden of Gethsemane scene shows a Jesus who wants his disciples to be "with" him as he undergoes his most strenuous test before God (Mark 14:33; compare Matt 26:36, 38, 40). Prayer is put forward as the means of watching and enduring trials (Mark 14:34, 37, 38). He warns them again and again of the dangers of spiritual lassitude in the face of sudden distress (8:32–38; 10:39; 13:5, 9–13, 20, 23, 32–36; 14:34, 38) but they fail to heed the warning (14:37–38, 40, 41). They do not possess Jesus' perception of the interconnectedness of the "will of God," how it encompasses both the salvation plan of God (e.g., the "hour" and the "cup") as well as the individual day-by-day choices made by the disciples and by Jesus (e.g., "watch and pray").

This leads to a third element of relevance for the thesis question: that the "will of God" is presented not so much as a limitation on prayer as the thing that prayer accomplishes through faith. Jesus, as the ideal petitioner, offers prayer in the belief that God is able to do all things, even to go about his plan of salvation in another way; and yet he offers it without disbelieving in God's goodness (contrast Mark 9:14–29). Is it possible—taking up the thought of John Koenig—that Jesus comes to understand and receive God's will for him within his salvation plan in the midst of
praying? The bonding of Jesus and the disciples in the episode implies that the same will be found by them in the future when, in some unknown way, Jesus' trial spills over onto them.

Finally, Gethsemane-type petitions are now prayed by those who know that the one who prayed in the Garden is risen and present with them: God answered Jesus' prayers by fulfilling his promises (cf. Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:34). The age in which the disciples live contains both the anguish of Gethsemane and the joy of resurrection hope, the "already" and the "not yet" of petitionary prayer.

The Gethsemane prayer scene shows primarily that God's salvation purposes, dependent faith, and suffering are brought together in petitionary prayer and that this can lead to a fresh understanding of each of these elements. Moreover, rather than Jesus' mediation for others in prayer, the Gethsemane prayer scene stresses that prayer is offered in partnership with Jesus in his trials; it is not persistence that will mark out successful petition but loyalty to Jesus. Lastly, prayer in such circumstances is offered in the light of Jesus' resurrection; the "not yet" is already guaranteed in his presence.

101 Koenig, Rediscovering, 60.
V. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

The three chapters of Part One have provided an extensive coverage of the central prayers and prayer promises of the Synoptic Gospels that touch upon the thesis question. Perhaps the most important—and most obvious—finding of the analysis is that promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer are not found in separate sections of the Synoptic prayer material but together, either in the same prayer or within the interpretive grid of the texts as a whole. It is as if they are intended to be related together. The petitions of the Lord's Prayer, for example, were not only found to emphasize opposite prayer tendencies (e.g., "your will be done" versus "give us today our bread for the day ahead") but also, within the same petition, to infer both promise to and restriction upon petition. Even the address of the Lord's Prayer ("Father") displays this dual quality. It is both a privileged and joyful means of access used by Jesus (e.g., Matt 11:25 par. Luke 10:21) and given by him to the disciples for this purpose and yet found on Jesus' lips in the anguish of the Garden of Gethsemane (with *Abba* in Mark 14:36). Moreover, the language of the third petition of the Lord's Prayer—an obvious restriction upon prayer ("your will")—is used by Jesus to pronounce healing upon a supplicant, inferring success in appealing to God in prayer. And so the illustrations may go on. In short, confidence and restriction in petitionary prayer are found to co-exist in the Lord's Prayer and this implies a norm.

The prayer promises (Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13; Mark 9:29; 11:22–25 par. Matt 21:21–22) also showed both promise and limitation in petitionary prayer. The command to "ask […] seek […] knock" (Matt 7:7–8 par. Luke 11:9–10) concludes with the promise of the provision of "good things" or the "Holy Spirit" to those who ask God for the necessities of life (Matt 7:11 par. Luke 11:13). This provision is an over-compensation and suggests that God has his own plan that is being achieved through petitions for the mundane. The promise of the Spirit here is really the promise of the kingdom of God (compare Luke 11:13 and 12:32), which is a dual-edged promise—right from the start of the Synoptic Gospels (e.g., Matt 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15)—of God's salvation and his judgement. The Markan prayer promises emphasize the access to God's power available for those who believe (Mark
9:22–24, 29; 11:22–24) even within the contexts of demonic possession and the resistance of Israel and point to a grander picture.

The Gethsemane prayer of Jesus provided the most poignant and climactic illustration of the integrated nature of promise and restriction in petitionary prayer: "all things are possible for you; take this cup from me, but not what I want but what you want" (Mark 14:36 par. Matt 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42). Complete trust ("all things are possible for you") and complete submission ("not what I want, but what you want") are conveyed in the present tense while the immediacy of the need ("take this cup from me") is expressed in the aorist tense. Once again, both promise and limitation in petition must be upheld, even when a particular request remains unanswered.

The main conclusion that one can draw from these results is that the tension between promise and restriction in petitionary prayer is embedded in the prayer teachings, prayer examples, and therefore the prayer-life of Jesus of Nazareth and that it is intended to be part of the disciples' prayer lives as well. The tension is not, however, one in which there is a "balance" between the two, or a stalemate. Rather, both promise and limitation retain their full value. Petitioners are to expect that God will answer prayer. His reliability is evidenced through Jesus' teaching and life, and even through his suffering. And yet petitioners must also face the reality of unfulfilled requests—as Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane makes so clear. Promise to and limitation upon petition must be held together in the warp and woof of prayer.

If a cause for this first observation is pursued, one theme comes up again and again: the "already–not yet" nature of the kingdom of God. The Lord's Prayer and the prayer promises exemplify the here-and-now aspect of the kingdom. God's power and goodness combine in the ministry of Jesus (and those who follow in his path) to create the most extravagant of prayer promises, even allowing for hyperbole. However, opposed to this extravagant generosity is the imminence of the Great Tribulation. The Lord's Prayer and especially the Gethsemane prayer (and its context) provide clear evidence that Jesus sensed an "hour" was upon him and that he was required to accept it as his own; the kingdom of God brings both judgement and salvation. Even though mentioned only fleetingly in the Synoptic Gospels with respect to prayer, the work of the Spirit in prayer must also be included here. The promise of the Spirit as the goal of petition (Luke 11:13) suggests that the Spirit is intimately involved in maintaining the eschatological tension between the promissory
and the restrictive teachings on prayer. The Spirit's role in petitionary prayer, particularly with respect to the relationship between promise and limitation, will re-emerge in the section on Paul below.

A second feature that emerged in study of the relationship between promise and limitation in the Synoptic prayer sayings (especially in the prayer promises but hinted in the other prayer sections) was Jesus' mediating role between the supplicant and God. Several components make up this role. Firstly, since God's kingdom has drawn near in Jesus of Nazareth, success in petition requires the recognition of his authority. One must accept that Jesus speaks from God and that the era of promise has arrived in him. Supplication of Jesus for healing or exorcism requires the discarding of all pretence before God and casting oneself upon the promises he makes through Jesus. Prayer must also assume this posture for it is nothing other than an expression—or the expression—of faith. Secondly, Jesus' authority is not remote in this new era but dynamically present. It is uncertain at some points in the story whether Jesus is the believer in the Markan prayer sayings or that the supplicant takes this role; the most probable answer is that both participate in successful requests. Jesus is thereby presented as a co-petitioner while the supplicant realises the necessity of complete dependence upon God only in Jesus' presence. One must conclude that the promise to petitionary prayer is grounded in the presence of Jesus. That this will be true also in the post-resurrection era is suggested in the episode about exorcism of the boy in Mark 9:14–29 (v. 27, "and he arose") and in the sharing of Jesus' cup in the Last Supper (14:23–24) which anticipates a future participation (v. 25). This Christological feature of petitionary prayer is clearly related to the eschatological tension noted in the previous observation: the "already" of the kingdom is inseparable from Jesus' ministry.

A third feature of petitionary prayer in the Synoptic Gospels, and one more related to the "not yet" aspect of the eschatological tension, is the necessity of the disciples to be with Jesus in his trials. The presence of the disciples at Gethsemane caps off their involvement in Jesus' ministry. Their witness of his prayers and final

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1 Jesus' promise in Matthew 18:19–20, provides the clearest example of Jesus' post-resurrection presence with the disciples who bring their requests to God. It is a key Matthean contribution to prayer and reflects that gospel's Christology and agenda (Matt 1:23; 28:19–20; cf. 25:31–45). The presence of Jesus may be seen as a promise to those who follow Jesus' instructions, including those about prayer. It is a theme found in each of the other prayer promise witnesses examined in this study.
struggle—and their participation in the cup of the Last Supper—point to the fact that they too are about to face a test of their faith like none other before. The Gethsemane prayer that Jesus offers echoes the petitions of the Lord's Prayer that Jesus teaches to the disciples. The "will" of God to which Jesus submits his own request is reserved for him alone, just as the joy he experienced over the "good pleasure" of God was his alone (cf. Matt 11:25–26 par. Luke 10:21–22).

Nevertheless, the disciples have a cup that they too must drink (Mark 10:38–39), a cup that Jesus has given to them and in which they have already participated (Mark 14:23–24 par. Matt 26:27–28; Luke 22:17, 20). It is after they have consumed this cup that Jesus will one day share the cup of blessing with them (Mark 14:25 par. Matt 26:29; Luke 22:18). Together with the previous feature of the Synoptic prayer material, this third feature means that promise and limitation are inseparable from the bond that unites Jesus and his disciples. Just as the generosity of the Father is found in making requests based on Jesus' words and presence, so also the distress of the Great Tribulation is found in belonging Jesus in the present age.

A fourth feature of the relationship between promise and limitation in petitionary prayer, seen primarily in Gethsemane, is that a fuller understanding of God's purposes may be obtained in the midst of prayer. The "crossover" between promise to and limitation upon petition is found in the act of prayer itself. Jesus prays three times, indicating he has reached a point of understanding rather than resignation. God's goodness and power was not restricted to the promises of prayer, but was found for him in the limitations as well.

The above conclusions have concentrated upon the eschatological and Christological features of the relationship between promise and limitation in petitionary prayer. Two conditions were also found in the Synoptic material that need brief expounding. In focussing on the power available to the one who believes, the prayer promises in the gospel of Mark highlight dependent faith as the primary quality. Here they draw attention as much to the character of God as to the character of the petitioner, including Jesus. Prayer may be confidently offered in the midst of spiritual and other opposition as long as it does not rest on its own strength, but on God alone. Prayer—even for material things—is offered in the midst of a battle against an enemy whose power reaches into the petitioner's heart to cause them to doubt in God's goodness and power. The condition of faith upon prayer is not fulfilled through self-exertion, however, but by self-abandonment and clinging to the
"things of God" rather than the "things of human beings" (Mark 8:33). The doubt of which Jesus speaks is not a rational quality but one that shows an orientation away from God under Satan's influence (8:34).  

The second condition for successful prayer—the forgiveness of sins—is better understood once the eschatological and Christological implications and contexts of petitionary prayer have been drawn out. For unless the threats of evil, harm, and sin are taken realistically prayer is never without pretence. The qualification of forgiveness on petitioners is a constant reminder of their own need for forgiveness and of God's initiative in Jesus. All requests are made of the same God, whose goodness and power as "Father" is available to all, without partiality, in the gospel of Jesus: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news" (Mark 1:15; NRSV).

In summary, then, the tension between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer in the Synoptic Gospels was found to be embedded in the material itself. No prayer saying or example can be taken in an exclusively promissory or restrictive manner; both aspects are found together and repeatedly so. The cause—as much as it can be determined—lies in the "already–not yet" nature of the kingdom of God, which is in the process of being revealed and fulfilled in Jesus' proclamation and deeds. Against this kingdom is another that seeks to deter and ultimately to destroy Jesus and those who belong to him. Success in prayer comes about because God promises it in his goodness and provides it in his power to those who, like Jesus, cast themselves upon him without pretence and with a genuine love of enemies. However, the kingdom does not appear in a "raw" fashion but is mediated—both in its promises and limitations—by Jesus as God's authoritative and exemplary Son.

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2 The use of ἔπιτιμῶν suggests the expulsion of a demon, or in this case, Satan, from Peter; see Roy D. Kotansky, "Demonology," DNTB: 272.
PART TWO: THE GOSPEL OF JOHN AND THE LETTER OF JAMES

VI. THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

A. Introduction to Part Two

Part One of this investigation concerned the Synoptic Gospels, where the relationship between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer is expressed most clearly. It was concluded there that the tension between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer is embedded within the prayer material of the Synoptic Gospels. Central to this tension is the "already–not yet" character of the unfolding salvation plan of God, a kingdom which is at the same time present and yet still to come. This kingdom was found to be opposed by another that continues to inflict distress upon the saints who are called to struggle in Jesus-like fashion against it, through prayer, assured of success. Essential to the relationship of promise and limitation is the mediation of Jesus. He announces God's promises to petitionary prayer and engages with the petitioner in prayer. He also provides an example of open-hearted confidence and willingness to submit to God to which disciples are necessarily drawn. The Synoptic Gospels showed, finally, that successful prayer is conditioned by sincerity of faith in God's goodness and power as well as the forgiveness of sins, again, mediated by Jesus' teaching and example.

When turning to the remainder of the New Testament, it is apparent that the witnesses to the above-mentioned tension may be divided into those that employ similar language and syntax to the prayer material of the Synoptic Gospels (e.g., John, 1 John, and Jas) and those that do not (e.g., the Pauline letters). Within a study of this scope it is not possible to investigate all the remaining witnesses with equal rigour and, as indicated Chapter I, it has been decided to select two witnesses that echo the prayer material of the Synoptic Gospels in Part Two, the Gospel of John (ch. VI) and the Letter of James (ch. VII) and to then turn to the Pauline Corpus in Part Three (chs. VIII–XI). The selection of Paul as a witness needs no justification, given the sheer volume of Pauline prayer material and the amount of previous research done upon it. Choosing other witnesses is less clear, however. John and James contain enough relevant and distinctive prayer material to form a sufficient basis, together with the Synoptic and Pauline material, upon which to draw
conclusions about the whole of the New Testament. Since, however, there are no obvious connections between them, no combined conclusions will be drawn from the Fourth Gospel and James, as they were from the Synoptic Gospels and will be from the Pauline Corpus. The conclusions of these chapters will be included in the final synthesis in Chapter XII.

B. Prayer in the Gospel of John

The Gospel of John contains over 60 verses of prayer (and hymnic) material—more than either Matthew or Mark, and almost as much as Luke. Jesus explicitly addresses God in prayer briefly at John 11:41–42 and 12:27–28 and at length in John 17:1–26, and is also characterised as one who petitions God successfully (9:31; 11:22). Jesus’ prayer instruction in John is confined to chapters 14–16 (14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23–24, 26) and heard by the disciples alone. Apart from these prayers and prayer instructions, many scholars consider the Prologue of the Gospel (1:1–18) to be an early Christian hymn—or to have such a hymn as one of its major sources.

Similarities between the prayer material of John and the Synoptic Gospels include the use of εὐχαριστήσας in the feeding accounts (John 6:11, 23; cf. Mark 8:6 par. Matt 15:36) and expressions used in prayer promises (see below). Other

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1 The use of "Gospel of John" or "John" in this chapter and elsewhere does not imply any statement on the origin, sources, or authorship of this book otherwise referred to as the "Fourth Gospel" or "John's Gospel." For the sake of simplicity the writer will be called the "evangelist," "writer," or "John."

2 Jesus’ last words from the cross (John 19:28, 30) do not count as petitions, though they may be prayers.


4 In the feeding of the 5,000—the story being told by John—Mark uses εὐλογεῖν (Mark 6:41 par. Matt 14:19; Luke 9:16) and not εὐχαριστεῖν. Both words were used interchangeably in thanksgivings over bread and wine by Jews at mealtimes (Barrett, *John*, 276).

5 The formula "whatever you ask" (using αἶτειν) together with "it will be given to you" (using διόδοναι) as well as the condition of "faith" are found in both John and the Synoptic Gospels (compare John 14:11, 12–14; 15:7, 16, and 16:23–24, 26, with Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–11, 13, and Mark 11:22–25 par. Matt 21:20–22). The more usual verb "to pray" (προσεύχεσθαι) is not found in John. Rather, two words are used by John for "ask": αἶτειν (John 4:9, 10; 11:22; 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24 [twice], 26), and ἐρωτᾶν (John 1:19, 21, 25; 4:31, 40, 47; 5:12; [8:7]); 9:2, 15, 19, 21; 12:21; 14:16; 16:5, 19, 23, 26, 30; 17:9 [twice], 15, 20; 18:19, 21 [twice]; 19:31, 38). Both words are used in prayer and non-prayer contexts. αἶτειν is used either by those who speak to Jesus about his praying (11:22), or by Jesus about the prayers of the disciples after he has departed (14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24 [twice], 26). ἐρωτᾶν is used predominantly in John in the sense of asking a question (1:19, 21, 25; 9:2, 15, 19, 21; 18:19, 21 [twice]). All of its other uses are by Jesus in reference to his praying to or making requests of the Father (14:16; 16:26; 17:9 [twice], 15, 20). The only other use of ἐρωτᾶν for prayer in the NT is in 1 John 5:16 where it appears to be synonymous with αἶτειν. While a case can be made for a distinction between ἐρωτᾶν and αἶτειν in John, the interchange of other synonymous terms in John urges caution (e.g., ἄγαπᾶν and φιλεῖν); see discussion in Auvinen, Prayer, 247–248; Caba, La oración, 305–316.


8 So also Raymond E. Brown, The Gospel according to John: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB 29–29A; 2 vols.; Garden City, N.Y.:

Previous studies of Johannine prayer have varied considerably in their approach, due both to the uniqueness and density of the material as well as scholars' aims. This chapter will not consider Johannine petition generally but determine the contribution of John's Gospel to the relationship between promises to petitionary


10 This does not mean Jesus is without emotion in prayer. For example, while Jesus appears unconcerned for Lazarus in his prayer (John 11:41–42; cf. vv. 4, 15), the same episode makes three references to Jesus' strong emotions (11:33, ἔνεβρυμήσατο τῷ πνεύματι καὶ ἐτάραξεν ἑαυτόν; 11:35, ἔδάκρυσεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς; 11:38, Ἰησοῦς οὖν πάλιν ἐμβρύμωμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ). If these are added to the prayer in 12:27 ("my soul is troubled," ἢ ψυχή μου τετάρακται), an internal struggle may be suggested, but not as strongly as that found in the Synoptic Gospels.

11 Lincoln, St John, 478: "[...] Jesus' last word is not the cry of abandonment but the cry of achievement, signifying the completion of his work."

prayer and its limitations upon it. In this regard, the prayer promises of Jesus in the Farewell Discourse are an obvious place to begin (John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, and 26; section C below). These will be examined in their literary and theological contexts.

To determine the nature of the limitations to petition in the Fourth Gospel is, however, a more complex task. John contains no specific teaching of Jesus on prayer conditions (cf. Mark 11:22–25). Some conditions are embedded in the prayer promises, and these will be uncovered in the exegesis stage. The clearest apparent condition is found in the prayer of Jesus in John 12:27–28 (in which Jesus refuses to pray for help in the "hour"). This passage will be considered in section D while section E will synthesise the findings and draw conclusions regarding the thesis question.

C. Jesus' Prayer Promises in John 14–16

The first part of this treatment of the prayer material of John's Gospel focuses on Jesus' prayer promises to the disciples (John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26). These offer a distinctively Johannine contribution to the question of petition and its limitations in the New Testament. The promises are contained within a discrete section of John's Gospel in which Jesus has turned from his ministry to the wider population of Israel to focus solely upon his disciples (John 13–17). An introduction to the literary context and genre of this section will precede and inform the detailed exegesis of these promises.

13 The prayer promises of 1 John 3:22 and 5:14 will not be covered in depth in this investigation due to limitations of length. It is hoped that they will be covered in a future study.
1. The Literary Context and Form of John 13–17

John 13–17 forms a lengthy, discrete unit within the gospel that both borrows from and contributes to the narrative flow of the story. In John 11–12 Jesus' ministry to Israel has come to a conclusion following the dramatic sign of the raising of Lazarus (11:1–44). Opposition against Jesus has intensified to the point of a plot to see him killed (11:45–53, 57; 12:9–11, 19; cf. 5:18; 7:1, 25; 8:59; 10:31). Jesus' awareness of what is to come reaches a climax when the "Greeks" seek an audience with him (12:21–22). He defines this moment as the "hour" of the exaltation of the Son of Man (12:23, 31–32) with its centre-point being him hoisted up on a cross (12:33). This exaltation becomes the pattern of discipleship (12:24–26), the means of "drawing all people" to himself (12:32), as well as the judgement of this world and its ruler (12:31). The "hour" also signals the twilight of Jesus' revelation to Israel as a whole (12:36b–50).

Immediately following John 13–17, Jesus' "departure" to the Father begins. Hostility against Jesus from the Jewish leadership ("the Jews") intensifies, climaxing in his crucifixion and burial at the hands of Pontius Pilate (John 18–19). Following

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14 The literary integrity of John 13–17 continues to be the subject of scholarly discussion particularly over the question of why Jesus' instruction in 14:31d (ἐγείρεσθε, ἤγωμεν ἐντεύθεν) is not acted on until 18:1 (ταῦτα ἔγραψεν Ἰησοῦς ἐξῆλθεν σὺν τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ). Many scholars argue that there were three (or four) separate speeches of the Farewell Discourse (13:31–14:31; 15:1–[17; 15:18–]16:4a; 16:4b–33), which perhaps represent the social history of the Johannine Christians as well as the textual history of the Farewell Discourse; e.g., John Painter, "The Farewell Discourses and the History of Johannine Christianity," NTS 27 (1981): 525–543. L. Scott Kellum, The Unity of the Farewell Discourse: The Literary Integrity of John 13:31–16:33 (JSNTSup 256; London/New York: T. & T. Clark International, 2004), 10–76, reviews the question in detail and concludes that—based on the style and structural unity of John 13:31–16:33, as well as a more objective procedure in determining aporia—John 13–17 is of one cloth both with the rest of the gospel and within itself (233). He concludes that the so-called aporia of John 14:31d is a regularly-used technique of "implied movement" (cf. 11:16, 44; 13:30; 14:31; 17:1; 20:11) that is intended to engender deeper discussion. See also the discussion of Frank Thielman, "The Style of the Fourth Gospel and Ancient Literary Critical Concepts of Religious Discourse," in Persuasive Artistry: Studies in Honor of George A. Kennedy (JSNTSup 50; ed. Duane F. Watson; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 180, and George L. Parsenios, Departure and Consolation: The Johannine Farewell Discourses in Light of Greco-Roman Literature (NovTSup 117; Leiden: Brill, 2005). For the present purposes it will be assumed that John 13–17 is a coherent and logical sequence of material; so also Lincoln, St John, 363.

15 John 13:1 and 18:1 mark distinctive beginnings of sections within the book and no others appear between these two markers.
his resurrection, Jesus' disciples see him again and are formally commissioned to continue his work of testifying to the revelation given by God in him (John 20).

John 13–17 is perhaps best viewed as a timeless[^16] bridge between Jesus' declaration of the hour's arrival in 12:23 and the events that make up that hour (especially, Jesus' glorification on the cross, John 18–19),[^17] in which the disciples are prepared not only for what is about to happen to Jesus, but also what will happen to them as a consequence. The unit concludes with Jesus' prayer, which functions as his own preparation for his departure to the Father as well as his handing over of the disciples to the Father's protection (ch. 17).

John 13–17 as a unit is generally agreed to belong to the farewell speeches (or, "testaments") of dying heroes found in the writings of the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, the New Testament, as well as in Greco-Roman sources.[^18] There

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[^16]: Jesus moves between the present and the future as he addresses the disciples. Gail R. O'Day, "'I Have Overcome the World' (John 16:33): Narrative Time in John 13–17," *Semeia* 35 (1991): 153–165, shows how in John 13–17 the future is split into a future within the narrative (after the resurrection) and a future beyond the story line (after Jesus has gone to the Father and sent the Spirit). O'Day (162–163), emphasizes Jesus' use of the perfect tense in 16:33 (ἐγὼ νενίκηκα τὸν κόσμον) to encompass his completed work—incomplete in narrative time—to give the disciples assurance of the future beyond the narrative storyline.


[^18]: Gen 49; Deut 31–33; Josh 22–24; 1 Kgs 2:1–12; and 1 Chron 28–29; 1 Macc 2:49–70; Jub 22:10–23:7; 36:1–19; Josephus Ant 12.6.3; *T. 12 Patr.*, *T. Mos.*; Luke 22:24–38; Acts 20:17–38; 2 Peter. Brown, *John*, 2:597–601, observes the following similarities between these and John 13–17: an announcement of departure; the sorrow of the audience; the recollection of God's acts for Israel (including the contribution of the speaker); a call to love one another; a call for unity; a description of the future fate of the audience including hatred from others; a blessing of peace; the issuing of promises to obedience (particularly to the dying hero's legacy); the instruction that the name of the departing person be preserved; the appointment of a successor; and, a closing prayer. To this list may be added the call for courage to face the future (Josh 23:6; 2 Chron 28:1–8; 1 Macc 2:61–64). See also Fernando F. Segovia, *The Farewell of the Word: The Johannine Call to Abide* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 5–20. Within the biblical material, the farewell speech concludes with a call to renew the covenant (Deut 31–33; Josh 23–24) with attendant blessings and curses; cf. W. S. Kurz, "Luke 22:14–38 and Greco-Roman and Biblical Farewell Addresses," *JBL* 104 (1985): 251–268. John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 418–453, adds a "commission" form to the testament form, though the two are closely associated.
are some elements of John 13–17 that fall outside this genre, but it remains the most useful literary parallel. The section may be broken down as follows: (1) Narrative Introduction to the Section (13:1–30); (2) Farewell Discourse to the Disciples (13:31–16:33); consisting of two–four sections, 13:31–14:31; 15:1–17; 15:18–16:4a; and, 16:4b–33; and, (3) Departing Prayer (17:1–26).

2. Introduction to the Prayer Promises of John 14–16

There are seven related prayer promises that occur in three clusters within John 13:31–16:33 (Cluster I: 14:13, 14; Cluster II: 15:7, 16; Cluster III: 16:23, 24, 26).

As evident in the following table, four elements are regularly found in the prayer promises of John 14–16:

19 Specifically, that the "hero" will return to the disciples after death and be present with them again after his death and that a "successor" will be sent who will be the hero's presence (i.e., the Paraclete). Parsenios, Departure, ch. 1 has recently argued that John 13–17 so "bends and twists" the basic expectations of the testament pattern that other literary genres must be incorporated into its description. He considers that John 13–17 evidences the characteristics and strategies of tragedies, consolations, and symposia in an effort to more effectively convey its message to its audience (49–50). This qualification of previous research is useful, but the testament should remain as the primary genre category and mode of interpretation in John 13–17 most available to the likely readers of John. For analysis of these chapters within classic rhetoric, see George A. Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 71–85, and the critique of Dennis L. Stamps, "The Johannine Writings," in Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 B.C-A.D.400 (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 609–632.


22 John 15:7, 16 are separated from each other by eight verses, but are both delivered in the context of the vine analogy and closely connected with bearing fruit and should be considered together.
promises of John: (1) introductory statement [A], which gives the saying its literary and theological context; (2) protasis of the prayer promise [B¹] including the basis of the prayer promise ("in my name," [B²]); (3) prayer promise in the apodosis [C]; and, (4) concluding purpose or reinforcement of the promise [D].
## TABLE VI.1 PRAYER PROMISES IN JOHN 14–16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introductory Statement (A)</th>
<th>Extent of Prayer Promise (B)¹</th>
<th>Basis/condition of Prayer Promise (B²)</th>
<th>Promise (C)</th>
<th>Closing Statement (D)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John 14:13</td>
<td>καὶ</td>
<td>ὃ τι ἄν αἰτήσητε</td>
<td>ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου</td>
<td>τούτῳ ποιήσω</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ἵνα δοξασθῇ ὁ πατήρ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 14:14</td>
<td>ἐὰν τι ἄν αἰτήσητε με</td>
<td>ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου</td>
<td>ἐγὼ ποιήσω</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 15:7</td>
<td>ἐὰν μείνητε ἐν ἐμοί καὶ τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν ύμῖν μείνη</td>
<td>ὃ τι ἄν αἰτήσητε</td>
<td></td>
<td>καὶ γενήσεται ύμῖν.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 15:16</td>
<td>οὐχ ὑμεῖς με ἐξελέξασθε, ἀλλ’ ἐγώ ἐξελέξαμην ὑμᾶς καὶ ἔθηκα ὑμᾶς ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑπάγητε καὶ καρπὸν φέρητε καὶ ὁ καρπὸς ύμῶν μένῃ, ἵνα</td>
<td>ὃ τι ἄν αἰτήσητε τὸν πατέρα</td>
<td>ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου</td>
<td>δῷ ύμῖν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 16:23</td>
<td>Καὶ ἐν ἑκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἔμε οὐκ ἔρωτῆσετε οὐδέν. ἐμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ύμῖν,</td>
<td>ὃ τι ἄν αἰτήσητε τὸν πατέρα</td>
<td>ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου</td>
<td>δώσει ύμῖν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 16:24</td>
<td>ἐς ᾧς ἅρτι οὐκ ἠθησάτε οὐδέν ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου</td>
<td>αἰτεῖτε</td>
<td>[found in introductory statement]</td>
<td>καὶ λήψεσθε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ἵνα ἡ χαρά ύμῶν ἦ πεπληρωμένη</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 16:26–27</td>
<td>ἐν ἑκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ</td>
<td>αἰτήσασθε</td>
<td>ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου</td>
<td>καὶ οὐ λέγω ύμῖν ὅτι ἐγὼ ἔρωτήσαμεν τὸν πατέρα περὶ ύμῶν· 27 αὐτός γὰρ ὁ πατήρ φίλει ὑμᾶς, ὅτι ύμεῖς ἐμὲ πεφιλήκατε καὶ πεπίστευκατε ὅτι ἐγὼ παρὰ τούθεον ἐξήλθον.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding the vocabulary register of the promises, the invitation to "ask" is made only with ἀστεῖν, the most common word for petitioning in New Testament prayer contexts (B1). It is used in the Johannine promises with the qualifying prepositional phrase "in my name" (B2; ἐν τῷ ὑπὸ τοῦ μου; 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26). A wider range of words convey the promise of an answer to the petition (C): ποιεῖν (14:13, 1424); ἀκούσαντι (16:24; cf. Matt 7:8 par. Luke 11:10; Mark 11:24 par. Matt 21:22; 1 John 3:22; James 4:3; 1 John 3:22); γίνεσθαι (15:725); and, διδόναι (John 15:16; 16:23; cf. Matt 7:7 par Luke 11:9; James 1:5; 1 John 5:16). One of the promises is explicitly conditional (15:7), but since all the promises are in the subjunctive mood, conditions may be inferred throughout.

3. Prayer Cluster I: John 14:13, 14

a. The Literary and Theological Context of John 14:13, 14

The first prayer promises in the Farewell Discourse conclude Jesus' first response to the disciples' anxiety about his departure (14:1–14). The positive exhortation in


24 ποιεῖν is found only in Luke 18:7 in a prayer context outside of John. The pairing of ποιεῖν with σημεῖα and ἔργα in John's Gospel may underlie its occurrence in John 14:13 and 14. The verb ποιεῖν is found some 98 times in John with only 27 of occurrences outside the Book of Signs. The significance of the verb in John 14:13, 14 is that it refers to Jesus (in the first person singular).

25 Matt 21:21 uses γενήσεται in a context about miracles and prayer, but is not found in a prayer saying, like John 15:7. γίνεσθαι is found 46 times in John, with 36 in the Book of Signs, but not with a particular significance.

26 O'Day, "John," 746, argues that John 14:12–14 begin a new unit since it starts with ὁμὴν ὁμὴν λέγω ὁμιλεῖ, ("which signal the introduction of a new teaching"), here treating "ways in which belief in Jesus empowers the believing community." There are similarities in the syntax of both 14:12–14 and 15–17 to support her division, however the use of ὁ πιστεύων in 14:12 ties it more firmly to the preceding verses which use the verb πιστεύειν (14:1, 10, 11; cf. v. 29)—as does the use of τὰ ἔργα (14:11, 12). Barrett, John, 186, says the asseveration formula introduces or gives emphasis to the following statement, not a section. Moloney, John, 396, sees the double "amen" as continuing what has been said before and bringing it to a conclusion. Schnackenburg, St John, 3:58, follows J. Becker, "Die Abschiedsreden Jesu im Johannesevangelium," ZNW 61 (1970): 223–228, and divides 14:1–17 (departure) from 14:18–31 (return). Brown, John, 2:623, suggests verses 13–14 are an example of Johannine overlapping, connecting vv. 1–12 and vv. 17–24, but then accepts vv. 1–14 as the unit. The theme from 14:15 onward is the keeping of Jesus' command(s), which occurs again at v. 21, creating an inclusion, leaving 14:1–14 as a distinct unit.
14:1, πιστεύετε εἰς τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἰς ἐμὲ πιστεύετε, counters the disciples' negative concerns over Jesus' departure (note the opening statement, μὴ ταρασσέσθω ὃμων ἢ καρδία; cf. 13:33, 36–38; 14:5, 27; 16:16–20). Two related benefits will flow to the disciples from Jesus' departure: (1) a "place" (τόπος) will be prepared for them (14:2); and, (2) Jesus will bring them to be with him (14:3). The primary response of Jesus to the disciples' anxiety is a promised future that centres on him as their destination and believing in him as the means to that destination (14:1b, 6). Successful prayer—like all the benefits of Jesus' departure (e.g., the Paraclete)—is restricted to the time between Jesus' departure to the Father and his return for the disciples.

The unit immediately preceding the prayer promise (i.e., John 14:10–11) is a call to the disciples to believe that Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in him (cf. 10:37–38). Jesus' works (and words) display the Father and demonstrate that Jesus is the (exclusive) way to the Father (14:6). The call to believe issued in 14:10–11

27 The spatial and eschatological duality is intentional in John 14:1–3 and the tension should not be collapsed into the coming of the Paraclete (14:23, 26); so Francis J. Moloney, "The Function of John 13–17 within the Johannine Narrative," in What is John? II. Literary and Social Readings of the Fourth Gospel (ed. Fernando F. Segovia; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars, 1998), 64; contra Schnackenburg, St John, 3:62.

28 Segovia, Farewell, 84–93, considers 14:4–14 to be one unit consisting of three rounds (vv. 4–6, 7–9, 10–14), with each round consisting of three parts: (1) a statement of assumed disciples' knowledge (vv. 4, 7, 10a); (2) a reaction by disciples to demonstrate a lack of knowledge (vv. 5, 8, [1]); and, (3) a correction by Jesus to the understanding the disciples have about Jesus and the Father (vv. 6, 9, 10b–14). Each successive "correction" expands on or deepens the previous one. Jesus' identification as the exclusive way to the Father (the ultimate destination of the disciples, v. 6) is grounded on the whole ministry of Jesus (v. 9).

29 The central statement—repeated in 14:10, 11—is a simple but profound chiasm (cf. 14:1; 10:37–38):

\[\xi\gamma\omega\xi\nu\tau\omega\nu\alpha\tau\rho\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\partial\nu\pi\alpha\tau\heta\partial\nu\xi\mu\omicron\iota\cdot\]

30 John 14:9–11 captures the essential Christology and story of John 1–12. The mission of Jesus is to reveal the Father through his words (3:34; 5:23–24; 8:18, 28, 38, 47; 12:49) and works (5:20, 36; 9:3–4; 10:25, 32, 37–38); see Peter W. Ensor, Jesus and His Works (WUNT 2/85; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1996), 238–241. Jesus does this because the Father reveals himself to him fully and uniquely and the Son is completely obedient to the Father. This revelation in turn
(πιστεύετε, v. 11) is the implied condition of the promises that follow in 14:12–14.  

The prayer promises in John 14:13, 14 are, therefore, the outcome of faith in Jesus as the complete revelation of the Father and as the only way to the Father (14:6). A circle is formed: the prayer promises emerge from and motivate continued faith in Jesus through offering prayers in Jesus' name (14:1b, 10–11, 12, 13; cf. 20:30–31; 1 John 5:13–15).

b. Exegesis of John 14:13, 14

12 Ἄμην ἄμην λέγω ὑμῖν, [A1]
   ὅ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμὲ [B1 + B2]
   τὰ έργα δ ἐγὼ ποιῶ κάκεινος ποιήσει
   καὶ μείζονα τούτων ποιήσει, [C1]
   οτι ἐγὼ πρός τὸν πατέρα πορεύομαι' [D1]
13 καὶ
   ὅ τι ἃν αἰτήσητε [B1:1+ B2:2]
   τοῦτο ποιήσω, [C2]
   ἵνα δοξάσητε ὅ πατήρ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ. [D2]
14 ἐάν τι αἰτήσητε με [B1:3+ B2:3]
   ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου ἐγὼ ποιήσω. [C3]

John 14:12–14 consists of three promises made in the form of either implicit (v. 12) or explicit (v. 13, 14) third-class conditional sentences. Verses 12–14 present the disciples with two positive consequences of Jesus' departure to the Father. Firstly, they will do greater works than he has done (v. 12), and, secondly, they will obtain


31 Segovia, Farewell, 90.
32 ἐντῆτε [B Q pc] have perhaps under the influence of Matt 7:7 par. Luke 11:9. The aorist is the most common tense in the Johannine prayer promises.
33 A D L Ψ 180 597, etc. omit με, but it remains the best supported and more difficult reading.
from Jesus any request (i.e., petition) they make in his name (vv. 13–14).  

The relationship between the "greater works" and "prayer in [Jesus'] name" has been variously understood among scholars. Moloney, for example, suggests both these promises refer to the same outcome: "There will be an in-between-time during which the disciples must ask in Jesus' name and he will continue to do the works of the Father among them." This view is perhaps over-restrictive, given the repeated use of "anything" (τί) in verses 13 and 14 (and in 15:7, 16; 16:23), as well as the openness of the substantival participle, "whoever believes" (ὁ πιστεύων, v. 12). A more satisfying approach is to recognise that while verses 12–14 form one sentence (and one theological whole) they contain two promises (καὶ = "and", v. 13a). A relationship between verse 12 and verses 13–14 is obvious from their common syntax and vocabulary: (1) believing in (ἐίς) Jesus is related to asking for anything in (ἐν) Jesus name; that is, asking in Jesus' name is not something separate from believing in Jesus as the revelation of the Father but an extension of it [line B]; (2) the believer doing (ποιήσει) greater works than Jesus may be likened to whatever is requested being done (ποιήσω) by Jesus; that is, Jesus lies at the centre of the fulfilment of the disciples' requests, even if he is not mentioned as the one who fulfils their prayers in subsequent prayer promises [line C], though see 15:5b; and, (3) Jesus' return to the Father may be likened to the Father being glorified in the Son (17:5, 24; 12:27–28; 13:31–32), that is, the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, as well as the sending of the Paraclete (in Jesus' name, 14:26), not only give glory to the Father (12:16), but lie at the heart of the disciples' "greater works" and their prayers [line D].

35 The emphasis on Jesus as the receiver and performer of the disciples' requests in his name distinguishes John 14:13, 14 from the other prayer promises in 15:7, 16 and 16:23, 24, 26.
37 So: Brown, John, 2:633; Köstenberger, John, 433; Schnackenburg, St John, 72.
38 Each contains a protasis (either a participle or verb [B¹] + object or means [B²]), and an apodosis (future tense verb [C]), with the first and second promises followed by either the reason for (ὅτι) or the purpose of (ἵνα) the promise (D).
39 Schnackenburg, St John, 3:72, agrees: "The statements with ποιήσω link the two promises together in such a way that what the disciples do (v. 12) once again reach a climax in what Jesus will do (vv. 13 and 14)."
The other obvious common theme in verses 12–14—and one that ties it firmly into its literary and theological context—is the centrality of Jesus to each verse and every action: he is the object of the disciples' faith, the pioneer of the works, the one who is returning to the Father (v. 12), the one in whose name prayers are made, the one who answers prayer (emphatic "I" in v. 14), and the means by which the Father will be glorified (vv. 13–14).

Given the placement of the first prayer promise near the beginning of the discourse, the repeated syntax it employs, and its emphasis on Jesus in each line, it is reasonable to conclude that it plays a guiding role for all the prayer promises. However, three questions need resolving in order to better understand this prayer promise: (1) if "anything" in the prayer promises (vv. 13–14) is syntactically (and theologially) related to the "greater works" (v. 12), then what are the greater works and what is the basis of their greatness? (2) Why will petitions uttered in Jesus' name be answered? (3) What does it mean to ask in Jesus' name?

i. What Are the "Greater Works" and Why Are They Possible?
The identity of the "greater works" of John 14:12 has been an interpretive crux. The most common view refers them to the missionary enterprise of the apostles and subsequent church. Other scholars are more nuanced, expressing that the success (or, "greatness") is not only external (numbers of new believers), but internal (a greater release of Jesus' power in both gathering and judgement). It is frequently noted that it is hard to imagine more spectacular (i.e., more powerful) miracles than those done by Jesus. A more complete answer to this question requires investigation of the phrase "greater works" or "greater" in the Gospel of John.

John 1 informs the reader that Jesus, as the "Son of Man," is the one upon/through whom "greater" things will take place (1:50–51). This declaration is immediately followed by Jesus' first "sign" (2:11). The only other occurrence of the phrase "greater works" is John 5:20. Jesus says in that context that his works (in this

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40 Segovia, *Farewell*, 91 n. 60, says that John 14:13, 14 present the "full mechanism" of the prayer promises in John. Schnackenburg, *St John*, 3:72, notes that the active voice distinguishes this promise both from the other Johannine promises and from those found in the Synoptic Gospels.

41 For example, Barrett, *John*, 460.

42 For example, Schnackenburg, *St John*, 3:72. The emphasis on power is regularly found in commentators (e.g., Brown, *John*, 2:633).

43 For example, Schnackenburg, *St John*, 3:71.
case the healing of the man at the Pool of Siloam, 5:1–9; cf. 7:21) point forward to "greater works" that he has been given to do by the Father—the works of giving life and rendering judgement (5:29)—which will give glory to him and thereby to the Father (5:20–23, 26–29; cf. 14:12–13). These "works" should not, therefore, be limited to Jesus' miraculous signs, but include his (associated) proclamation, which, together with his deeds, are life to those who believe and death to those who do not believe (3:15–21, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47, 63b; 20:30–31).

In John 14:12, the Father's judgement and salvation (i.e., giving life), which are active in Jesus' works (cf. 5:25), may therefore be said to continue in the works of the disciples (cf. 16:7–11). Jesus' commission of the disciples after his resurrection to pronounce and withhold forgiveness is an example of such a ministry of judgement and salvation (John 20:21–23; cf. 1 John 5:16–17—note the preceding prayer context, vv. 14–15). Jesus' breathing out of the Spirit upon the disciples (John 20:22) signifies that their commission is like Jesus' and the Spirit's commissions (i.e., to testify to the truth; cf. 18:37; 14:16–17, 26; 15:26–27; 16:7–15). In short, the disciples will continue Jesus' mission of bringing life and light as well as death and darkness. How this takes place is filled out in the remainder of the Farewell Discourse.

The reason why the disciples will be able to do greater works than Jesus is that Jesus is going to the Father (v. 12d, ὅτι ἐγὼ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα πορεύομαι). Elsewhere in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus' departure to the Father is understood to encompass not only his ascension, but also his death and resurrection (e.g., 13:1–3). The departure motif is a shorthand way of saying that Jesus has completed the "work" given him by the Father—for which he was sent (4:34; 17:4, 13; 19:30)—and that he is now returning to the place from which he came (16:28) to receive the glory prepared for him (17:5, 24). Jesus' return to the Father is the governing theme of this chapter and the Farewell Discourse as a whole (e.g., 14:2, 3, 12, 18, 25, 28; 16:5, 7, 16–24, 28). Jesus stresses throughout that his departure does not mean his absence from the disciples but his presence with them (14:18–20, 23, 27–28; 16:7, 16, 20b, 44 For example, Brown, John, 2:633. Brown draws attention to miraculous works promised by Jesus to the disciples and performed by them in the Synoptic Gospels and Acts (Matt 21:21; Mark 16:17–18; Acts 5:1–11; 9:34, 40). But John is not merely copying the Synoptic testimony (in whatever form it came to him) but rather extending it. 45 So also Ridderbos, John, 642.
His departure to the Father is, in effect, the catalyst of the new age in which the disciples will enjoy Jesus' presence and benefits in a fuller way than when he was with them, because his work will have been completed (19:30; cf. 4:34; 17:4; cf. Luke 12:50). Just as Jesus' signs reveal his glory (2:11) and the glory of the Father (5:36) on earth, so also the works that the disciples will do will reveal the Son (and, therefore, the Father) because the Son will be their author (14:13, 14, "I will do"). The "greatness" of the works that the disciples will do, therefore, is a mark of the era in which they are done and not their magnitude when compared to Jesus' miracles.

The works promised [...] are acts, like those of Jesus, which display the character and power of God. They can be described as greater, presumably not because they are more astounding, but both because they will be done after the events of the "hour" and are therefore able to reveal the completed story of God's dealings with the world through Jesus, and because they will extend further, making the life and judgement of God known throughout the world.\(^47\)

Because the Son has completed his work and returned to the Father, the era of greater works and answered prayer has begun. This wide-ranging promise (John 14:13–14) is also a measure of the new status that Jesus possesses in his exaltation. In the Synoptic prayer promises, it was God (and those who believe in him through Jesus' promise) who could do the impossible (e.g., Mark 10:27; 14:36) but in the prayer promise of John 14:13–14, it is the exalted Son who will do it, again through his disciples.

\(^46\) Although a dividing line is hard to discern in the Farewell Discourse between Jesus' coming after his resurrection and at his Parousia (e.g., 16:20–23), the emphasis throughout is that it will be better for the disciples in the future beyond Jesus' departure.

ii. Why Will Petitions Uttered in Jesus' Name Be Answered?

The goal of the disciples’ making requests in Jesus' name is "that the Father might be glorified in the Son" (Ἰνα δοξασθῇ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ).\(^{48}\) The glorification of the Father is the Son's ultimate desire in John's Gospel (e.g., 12:28; 17:4). The verb δοξάζειν is used with ὁ πατὴρ and/or ὁ υιός (or related terms and pronouns) in all but one of the verb's 18 occurrences in John (7:39; 8:54; 11:4; 12:16, 23, 28; 13:31 [twice], 32; 14:13; 15:8; 17:1; 17:5). Although the glorification of the Father and the Son is mutual (8:54; 12:27–28; 13:31, 32; 14:13; 15:8; 17:1, 4–5), the emphasis in John is that the Son glorifies the Father by his obedience to the Father's will or command (4:34; 10:18; 12:28; 14:30–31; 15:10, 15; 17:4, etc.).\(^{49}\) The glory spoken about in John 14:13, however, is a post-resurrection glory that comes to the Father as a result of petitions being asked (and answered) in Jesus' name after he has returned to the Father. It is as if the glorifying obedience of the Son continues into his ascended state and the disciples, who are bound to him, participate in his glory by making their requests.\(^{50}\)

The making and granting of prayer requests in the Fourth Gospel is the reinforcement or vindication of the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son. In the continuation—or expansion—of the works and words of the Son through the accompaniment of the disciples' prayers, the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son will be confirmed, bringing glory to the Father (5:43–44; 12:23; 13:31–32; 17:4–5). The mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son is reinforced through the use of the preposition ἐν in verses 10–11 (cf. 10:30, 38), which is repeated in the purpose

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\(^{48}\) See also the uses of the noun δόξα that speak of the disciples seeing the "glory" of the incarnate Word or Son (1:14; 2:11; 11:40; 12:41[?]; 17:24), which he has revealed to them (17:22), a glory which he had with the Father before his coming (17:5, 24). The controversy Jesus has with "the Jews" throughout John 2–12 is over whether he gives glory to himself or whether it is the Father who glorifies him (5:41, 44; 7:18; 8:50, 54). The Pharisees loved the glory of "man" and not the glory of God (12:43).

\(^{49}\) The verb δοξάζειν is also strongly linked to the "lifting up" of the Son of Man (3:14; 8:28; 12:34; cf. 1:51; 6:27, 53, 62; 9:35; 12:32), where υψοθηκα is a synonym for his crucifixion and exaltation in John (see BDAG, 1045–1046, υψοθηκα). See Godfrey C. Nicholson, *Death as Departure: The Johannine Descent–Ascent Schema* (SBLDS 63; Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1983), for extended discussion, esp. pp. 141–144, on this unique aspect of Johannine Christology.

\(^{50}\) Untergassmair, *Im Namen Jesu Beten*, 67–69. No doubt the disciples will continue to glorify the Father in following the Son because the Paraclete will take the things of Jesus—who has received all things from the Father—and proclaim them to the disciples (16:14; cf. 17:2).
clause of verse 13. This is not a static union, but an active one in which the Son speaks the Father's words (7:16–17; 8:26–28; 12:49–50) and does the Father's works (5:17–20, 36; 9:4; 10:37–38) through the disciples and their prayers.

Jesus' prayer, "Father [...] glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you" (17:1c; cf. 12:27–28; 13:31–32) is fulfilled through the accomplishment of the disciples' prayers offered in his name. At the same time, through following the instruction to pray in Jesus' name, the disciples' faith will be re-grounded in the union of the Father and the Son (14:1, 9–11).

iii. What Does It Mean to Ask in Jesus' Name?
The basis of the disciples' requests is that they be offered "in my name" (14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26). There are already several dedicated studies of this distinctively Johannine phrase so a full discussion is not required here.51 Broadly speaking, within the Old Testament and the early Jewish literature, God's name is employed as a substitute term for himself and includes his actions, his reputation, his possessions, and his holy character (e.g., Ezek 20:39; 36:23). Neither the name nor that which bears it may be misused (e.g., Exod 20:7; Jer 7:8–14). Those who act on behalf of God act in God's name (usually ἐν πώ is used in LXX) and possess both the authority and the responsibility of using that name (e.g., Deut 18:19–20).52 The temple is the central place in which God's name dwells (though he himself dwells in heaven) and is a focus of Israelite prayer (Deut 12:5, 11, 21; cf. vv. 14, 18, 26; 16:2; 1 Kgs 8:16–20, 29, 43, 48).53

52 Studies of the word δόμος in a prayer context against its OT, late Second Temple, and Greco-Roman contexts and uses include, H. Bietenhard, "Name," NIDNTT 2: 648–656; Hans Bietenhard, "δόμος, κτλ.," TDNT 5: 242–283; Lars Hartman, "δόμος," EDNT 2: 519–522; Keener, John, 947–950; Untergassmair, Im Namen Jesu Beten, 29–47. Untergassmair, Im Namen Jesu Beten, 59, concludes that there is no clear background for the Johannine expressions in either Jewish or Greco-Roman sources.
53 Carol Meyers, "Temple, Jerusalem," ABD 6: 359–360, for a summary of the temple as the cosmic centre and dwelling place of God.
The New Testament shows a similar pattern of usage to the above, although—as one would expect—the name of Jesus is used in similar ways to the divine name, particularly in connection with the establishment and continuance of a believer's relationship with him. Concerning the precise phrase under investigation (ἐν τῷ ὄνομάτι μου), just over 50 of the 231 New Testament uses of ὄνομα also employ the prepositions εἰς, ἐν, or ἐπί (which are used almost synonymously). One lexicon suggests that when ὄνομα refers to a divinity and is used with any of the three prepositions it means "with mention [i.e., utterance or invocation] of the name." A history-of-religions approach is presupposed here, in which the names of the gods were used (frequently in magic formulas) to obtain favours (e.g., 1 Cor 12:1–3; Acts 19:11–20; cf. 8:18–24). The New Testament approach to prayer may be distinguished from magic, particularly with respect to bargaining, reciprocity, and the polytheistic nature of Greco-Roman religions.

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54 See e.g., Matt 1:23; 18:20; Phil 2:10 (his presence); Matt 7:21–22 (his reputation); Rom 1:4–5 (his commission); and, Matt 6:9 (a combination of features).


56 BDAG, 717, ὄνομα.

57 For example, Bietenhard, "ὄνομα, κτλ.," 243; Crump, Petitionary Prayer, 169–178.

Apart from John's Gospel, there is a surprising lack of references in the New Testament to *praying* in Jesus' name (only Eph 5:19–20). The closest parallel in the Gospels to the phrase ἐν τῷ ὄνομά μου outside of John is Matthew 18:19–20:

19 Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.
20 For wherever two or three are gathered *in my name*, I am there among them. (NRSV)

These verses conclude instructions about community discipline (18:15–18; note the adverb πᾶλιν in v. 19). Jesus offers two promises to the disciples: (1) that if two or three disciples come to an agreement (on a discipline matter) and ask (οὐ εἶπεν αἰτήσωνται) for God's guidance (or blessing) about it (?), they can be assured of receiving an answer; and, (2) that when (the same?) two or three disciples gather in Jesus' name on such an occasion Jesus himself is with them. The "name" and presence of God in Jesus is a unifying theme of Matthew (Matt 1:23; 28:20). Those meeting in his name and agreeing on what he commands can be assured of their requests because of his presence. The portrayal of a community that fulfils Jesus' commands and thereby enjoys his presence resonates with many instructions of the Farewell Discourse (e.g., John 14:15–24; 15:1–17). Nevertheless, Matthew 18:19–20 does not recommend praying in Jesus' name, but gathering in Jesus' name, so the parallel with John 14:13 and 14 (and 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26) is not complete.

59 W. Bingham Hunter, *What Does It Mean to Pray in Jesus' Name?* (Theological Resources Electronic Network, 1987 [cited 2006]); available from http://www.tren.com/e-docs/search_w_preview.cfm?pETS-0012. However, Paul refers to praying and giving thanks to the Father through Jesus Christ (e.g., Rom 1:8), so petitions in Jesus' name may not have been uncommon.

60 Note also the phrase "because of my name" (John 15:21, διὰ τὸ ὄνομά μου), which equates with "because of me/or for my sake" (Matt 5:11; 10:22; 23:31, and parallels) and is mostly found in a mission/persecution/perseverance context in the Synoptic Gospels. The phrase means to identify with the name of Jesus completely and is a requirement of discipleship (cf. Matt 7:21–23; 25:31–45; 10:40–42, and parallels).


62 The work of judging the sins of others (Matt 18:15–18) is very similar to withholding the forgiveness of sins (John 20:23; cf. Matt 16:19; 18:18).


The Gospel of John contains 25 uses of ὄνομα (including three people's names, 1:6; 3:1; 18:2). Three occur with the preposition εἰς in combination with the verb πιστεύειν (1:12; 2:23; 3:18; cf. 1 John 5:13; all author's comments). Fourteen occur with the preposition ἐν, including twelve on Jesus' lips (John 5:43 [twice]; 10:25; 12:13 = Ps 117:26a [LXX]; 14:13, 14, 26; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26; 17:11, 12). Of Jesus' uses of ὄνομα with ἐν, five refer to or are used in connection with the Father's name (5:43a, 43b; 10:25; 17:11, 12), six belong in the prayer promises (14:13, 14; 15:16, 16:23, 24, 26), and one refers to the Father's "giving" of the Paraclete "in my name" (14:26).

Apart from the prayer promises, therefore, the use of ἐν + ὄνομα is reserved in John for occasions when Jesus' name and the Father's name are found together (5:43a, 43b; 10:25; 17:11, 12), usually as part of Jesus' proclamation that he has come in the name of the Father and to reveal the Father (5:43a; 10:25; 12:28; 17:6, 11, 12, 26). The first—and possibly programmatic—use of the phrase ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου (5:43) concludes Jesus' defence against the charge of "making himself equal to God" (5:18) as well as the counter-charge he makes against his accusers, who have not listened to his witnesses.

The revelation of the person of the Father in the deeds and words of the Son implies the sending of the Son by the Father as a fully authorised representative ("I have come"; 1:7, 9, 11, 15, 26; 3:2, 19, 31; 4:25; 5:43, 7:27, 28, 31, 41, 42; 8:14, 42; 10:10; 11:27; 12:13, 15, 27, 46, 47; 15:22; 15:26; 16:7, 8, 13, 28). The works that Jesus does in his Father's name also signify the unity he has with the Father (10:30; 11:27; 12:13, 15, 27, 46, 47; 15:22; 15:26; 16:7, 8, 13, 28).

65 One use, John 10:3, refers to the shepherd who calls his sheep "by name," explained as Jesus knowing the names of his disciples and protecting them forever (10:14, 27; cf. 14:2, 3). On another occasion, Jesus speaks of the disciples' persecution being on account of (διὰ) Jesus' name (15:21; cf. Matt 24:9 par. Mark 13:9). By way of comparison with the other gospels, Matthew and Mark have only a few uses of ὄνομα to introduce people to readers, whereas Luke has 23 such uses and Acts has 27.

66 These occasions equate to the common Johannine idiom of "believing in" Jesus (πιστεύειν + εἰς + noun/pronoun; 2:11, 23; 3:16, 18, 36; 4:39; 6:29, 35, 40; 7:5, 31, 39, 48; 8:30; 9:35; 10:42; 11:25, 26, 45, 48; 12:11, 36, 37, 42, 44, 46; 14:1, 12; 16:9; cf. 1 John 5:10, 13), for whom ὄνομα is a substitute.

67 Other uses of ὄνομα that refer to the name of the Father are 12:28; 17:6, 26.

68 See general discussion in Schnackenburg, St John, 72–73.

69 John the Baptist (5:33–36a—who was sent by the Father), the works given by the Father (5:36bc), the Father himself (5:37–38), and the Scriptures (5:39–40).
One cannot call upon the "name" of the Father without calling upon the "name" of the Son (14:6–7) or be drawn to the Father without being drawn to the Son (6:44; 10:27–29).

Within the Johannine framework, then, to ask "in my name" means to ask the Father on the basis of the revelation of the Father's name in the Son, a revelation which is about to be completed in the lifting up of the Son of Man (cf. 12:31–36a).

This revelation calls for a response of faith (e.g., 12:36b–50; cf. 14:1–11) and continued abiding in Jesus' words—items which the prayer promises alight upon.

Praying in Jesus' name is not merely invoking his name or entering into the realm

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70 Untergassmair, *Im Namen Jesu Beten*, 47–57. In John 3:19–21 and 8:39–47 it is clear that works (*ἐργα*) reveal the true nature of the person, and hence their origin. It is the same with the Son's works, which reveal his true identity and origin to those for whom it has been given to know it.

71 Neyrey, *Give God the Glory*, 190–197. Jesus' revelation of the Father sets to one side the purpose of the temple as the place in which God's name dwells and to which prayers may be directed (1:14, 51 [cf. Gen 28:17]; 2:18–22; 4:21–24). Jesus himself becomes the dwelling place of both God and those the Father has chosen (1:51; 14:1–11, 23; 17:24).

72 John 14:26 indicates that the "name" of the Son is the basis (or means?) of the giving of the Spirit by the Father (after the Son's departure to the Father; cf. 14:24–29; 15:26). The Spirit is given at the Son's request (14:16) or sent by the Son (from the Father, 15:26; 16:7) to continue the Son's work (14:26; 15:26; 16:8–11) given to him by the Father (16:14–15). The name of Jesus, therefore, is more than a prayer formula: it stands for the completed work of Christ. To make requests of the Father in Jesus' name necessitates believing that Jesus has been glorified on his return to the Father and given authority over all flesh (17:2).

73 Brown, *John*, 2:636: "A Christian prays in Jesus' name in the sense that he/she is in union with Jesus. Thus, the theme of asking 'in my name' in xiv 13–14 continues and develops the indwelling motif of 10–11: because the Christian is in union with Jesus and Jesus is in union with the Father, there can be no doubt that the Christian's requests will be granted." The same point may be made by noting that John 15:7 is the only prayer promise that does not use the formula "in my name" (*ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου*), even though it is identical to 14:13 in its protasis and to all the prayer promises (except 16:24) in its syntax. The purpose of the phrase *ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου* may already be captured by the expanded apodosis of the promise: "If you remain in me and my words remain in you" (*ἐν μείνητε ἐν ήμοι καὶ τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν ὑμῖν μείνῃ*). More detailed investigation of this promise lies ahead, but it may be suggested at this juncture that "in my name" also embraces the command to abide in Jesus and/or his words. That is, the union the believer has with the Son and the Father is an imitative and obedient union and not merely a relational union; the union is active as well as passive. So also Lincoln, "God's Name," 174.

74 Bietenhard, "ὄνομα, κτλ.,” 271.
of his saving power, nor is it limited to asking with Jesus as intercessor or in accordance with the will of God. Rather, praying in Jesus' name means to pray with the confidence of one who has personally accepted and embraced Jesus—in his words and deeds—as the full and final revelation of the Father (1:12–13; cf. 1 John 3:1) and as one who continues to abide in him. Such prayer will bring glory to the Father and to the Son because it highlights the union of the Father and the Son and testifies to the fact that whoever has seen the Son has seen the Father. It will also bring glory to the Father because it is a response to the Son's command who sends his disciples just as he was sent by the Father.

c. Conclusion
The above discussion of the prayer promise of John 14:12–14 began with the observation that the verses form a syntactical and semantic whole that consists of two related benefits of Jesus' departure: the ability to do greater works than Jesus himself did (v. 12), and the opportunity to ask anything in Jesus' name (vv. 13–14). The former benefit will become possible because the Son has returned to the Father and has inaugurated a new age in which his disciples—who are now united with the Son and the Father—will continue his work of announcing salvation and judgement. Prayer in Jesus' name also operates within this new era and is motivated by the glorification of the Father in the Son. The "greater works" that the disciples will do

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76 Cullmann, *Prayer*, 99–104. This seems specifically ruled out by 16:26: "I do not say to you that I will ask the Father on your behalf," unless Cullmann intends a wider use of intercessor, as found in, say Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25; and, 1 John 2:1.

77 Hunter, *Jesus' Name* ([cited]: "[U]ltimately what it means for you and me to pray in Jesus' name [is] to pray according to the will of God." Many scholars include this within their understanding of the phrase; e.g., Keener, *John*, 2:949; Koenig, *Rediscovering*, 58; Stolle, "Das Gebet," 308, "Weil das Gebet im Namen Jesu dem Willen Gottes entspricht, kann man fest damit rechnen, dass, geschieht, was so gebetet wird."

78 So also, David Michael Stanley, *Boasting in the Lord: The Phenomenon of Prayer in Saint Paul* (New York/Paramus/Toronto: Paulist, 1973), 108: "When the Christian addresses the Father with attention to his union with the incarnate and risen Son, he prays 'in Jesus' name,' and such a prayer is universally efficacious."

79 Keener, *John*, 2:949: "Most likely, asking 'in his name' signifies asking 'as his representative, while about his business,' just as Jesus came in his Father's name (5:43; 10:25)."
will continue the Son's ministry of life and death, climaxing in the declaration or withholding of forgiveness of sins in the power of the Spirit (20:22–23). While petitions in Jesus' name are not to be limited to such outcomes—"anything" (14:13, 14) should not be robbed of its natural meaning—there is an expectation that such goals (i.e., the continuation of the Son's ministry and its effects) are to guide the disciples' requests. Asking in Jesus' name not only implies believing that Jesus is the revelation of the Father, but also that the mission given to him by the Father continues through those who pray, bringing glory to the Father (cf. 17:20–24). The glorification of the Father is Jesus' ultimate goal in John's Gospel and so forms the ultimate condition of prayer (12:27–28; 15:7–8; 17:1, 4–5; cf. Matt 6:9 par. Luke 11:2).

The first prayer cluster of the Farewell Discourse resonates with both kinds of Synoptic prayer promise examined in chapter III above. Although the Johannine promises are not expressly conditional, to ask in Jesus' name acts as a condition, requiring the petitioner to believe that Jesus is the revelation of the Father (i.e., the Father's name) and united with the Father in all things. This kind of faith differs from that depicted in the prayer promises of Mark 9:22–24 and 11:22–24, which contrasted faith with doubt—an inner attitude of the heart that was suspicious of God's motives and/or power mediated by Jesus.

A second difference between the Synoptic prayer promises and the first Johannine prayer promise is that the "greater works" of John's Gospel look past those things that are immediate (e.g., demon-possessed boy, Mark 9:25–27; the fig tree, Mark 11:20–21) to those things that have eternal life or death as their outcome. The Synoptic prayer promises may be considered the seedbed for the Johannine promises, which have been recast within the Johannine Christological framework, but not so as to rob them of their vibrancy.

Finally, the Synoptic prayer promises, especially in Mark 9:14–29 and 11:22–25, connected the theme of the salvation plan of God (realised in his kingdom) with the individual's needs or circumstances, including Jesus in Gethsemane. The Johannine promises direct attention away from the kingdom of God on earth to the glorification of the Father in the exaltation of the Son, whose work continues through the disciples.

In short, Jesus' prayer instructions in John 14:13–14 promise to supply the requests of those who ask in his name (i.e., to believe in him) so that the Father
might be glorified in the Son. The basis of the promise is the completion of the Son's work through returning to the Father. A new era of prayer will begin in which the disciples are invited to participate and thereby continue the Son's work. The connection between everyday prayer needs and the salvation plan of God is not as firmly made as it was in the Synoptic prayer promises (cf. Luke 11:9–13), but the "works" of Jesus that the disciples will continue in this new era (14:12) will embrace the whole of life's trials.

4. Prayer Cluster II: John 15:7, 16

a. The Literary and Theological Context of John 15:7, 16

The second cluster of Johannine prayer promises occurs within John 15:1–17, a discrete section within the Farewell Discourse (either 15:1–16:4a or 15:1–16:33). The section is comprised of two units (vv. 1–8 and vv. 9–17) that are held together by the themes of "abiding" in Christ (vv. 4, 5, 6, 7; vv. 9, 10), "bearing fruit" (vv. 2, 4, 5, 16), keeping Jesus' "word(s)"/"commandments" (vv. 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 17), the initiative of Jesus towards the disciples (vv. 3, 15), and the prayer promises under discussion (vv. 7, 16).

The two units (vv. 1–8, 9–17) also bear a common structure and the whole section (vv. 1–17) is introduced by verses 1–2: there is a vine [= Jesus] that has a vinedresser [= the Father] who either removes or prunes the branches of the vine [= the disciples] according to their fruitfulness. The purpose of the vine is to produce

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80 Segovia, *Farewell*, 125–131, sees a common three-part pattern in both vv. 1–8 and 9–17: (1) a description of the fundamental relationship of the Father, the Son, and the disciples (vv. 1–2; v. 9ab); (2) a call to the disciples to live within this relationship appropriately (vv. 3–7; vv. 9c–11); and (3) a reinforcement of the opening fundamental relationship (vv. 8; vv. 12–17); cf. Ridderbos, *John*, 514–522. Carson, *John*, 510–511, argues that the sections consist of vv. 1–8 and vv. 9–16 with v. 17 as "transitional" (524), but v. 17 is clearly an inclusio with verse 12.

81 The nature and background of the vine image is beyond the present discussion; see Schnackenburg, *St John*, 3:104–108, and Köstenberger, *John*, 448–454, for comments. Israel as the planted vine of God is the most likely background in mind (see Isa 5:1–7; 27:2–6; Jer 2:21; 6:9; 8:13; 12:10; Ezek 15:1–8; 17:1–10; 19:10–14; Hos 10:1; 4 Ezra 5:23). That vv. 1 and 5 differ in their ascription of Jesus as "true vine" and "vine" makes it unlikely that the redemptive-historical parallels should be taken as supercessionism. As Barrett, *John*, 471, notes, the OT eschatological overtones of the vine imagery have not been retained here. Nevertheless, the connection between John 15:1–17 and 2:1–12 should not be overlooked: Jesus' abundant provision for/within Israel demonstrates his centrality in the restoration
"more fruit" (vv. 2, 5, 8; cf. v. 16)—leaving to one side how fruit should be defined. The means of inclusion in the vine is "the word that I have spoken to you" (v. 3), that is "all that I have heard from my Father" (v. 15). Inclusion in the vine renders a status of either being "clean" (v. 3) or being among Jesus' "friends" (vv. 14–15). As branches in the vine, the disciples are commanded to "abide" in Jesus (v. 4) and are promised Jesus' presence and its resultant fruit as they do (vv. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16). In this scenario, then, abiding in Jesus is the essential condition of fruit-bearing and fruit-bearing is the promised result (vv. 4–6) that brings glory to the Father (v. 8). The repetition of the essential condition of abiding in Jesus (in order to bear fruit) shows that it is the main point of verses 1–8 (and the foundation of verses 9–17). Abiding and bearing fruit are also at the heart of the prayer promises (vv. 7, 16).

"Abiding"—the central metaphor in John 15:1–17—has a passive and an active side to it. The passive side of abiding is reflected in the promise of Jesus to be with the disciple who abides in him: "Remain in me, and I in you" (cf. 6:56; 14:1–3, 23). Jesus' promise of the eternal presence of the Paraclete in John 14:15–17 is another way of referring to the passive presence of God within the believer. These equate to sharing in eternal life that begins in the present and climaxes in the future with a

purposes of God. It is also unlikely that the vine symbolism is intended to convey details of sacramental belief or practice; Barrett, John, 470.

82 This "word" stands for the whole revelation made known throughout Jesus' ministry and does not refer only to his teaching; cf. 6:63; 14:10–11, 23; 16:15.

83 Porter, Verbal Aspect, 222, quotes Brooke Foss Westcott, The Gospel according to St John (London: John Murray, 1919), 219, who refers to bearing fruit as a "necessary consequence."

84 It is worth noting that the outcomes of abiding and not abiding in Jesus (pruning and bearing more fruit versus being cast off and burned) mirror the salvation/judgement outcomes noted earlier in the gospel (e.g., 3:16–21, 36; 5:20–24), which are reflected in the previous prayer promise.


86 Schnackenburg, Johannine Epistles, 101–102, calls this "reciprocity." On p. 103 he summarises the "mystical" and the "ethical" uses of the verb "to abide" in both John and the Johannine letters. The primary command is to believe the revelation that has come from the Father in the Son.
"home" with Jesus and the Father (14:1–3, 23). However, the passive abiding of Christ in the believer presupposes an active abiding, that is, the believer's response of obedience to Jesus' commands (or words), a theme that dominates John 15:1–17. The imperative mood (μείνατε, v. 4) and the antithetical conditional sentences (vv. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 14) stress the necessity of abiding (cf. vv. 2a, 6). The disciples abide in Jesus by abiding in his words (cf. 8:31). The "word" in which they are to abide is grounded in Jesus' proclamation that he has come from the Father (8:30; 14:6–11). If they abide (or believe, 8:30, 31) in him (i.e., in his words), they will be truly free (i.e., have eternal life, cf. 3:34; 8:37; 14:10; 17:18). Jesus himself abides in the words of the Father and enjoys his presence (8:29; 16:32; cf. 4:34; 5:30; 6:38). Just as Jesus obeys the Father's word and is loved by the Father so also the disciples are loved if they keep Jesus' commandments (15:10); the Father and the Son will abide in such a person (14:23). Of course, the overall initiative to abide does not lie with the disciples. They are able to abide in Christ because they are already "clean" (15:1–4), which translates in verse 16 into them being "chosen" (cf. 6:39, 44; 10:25–30). Apart from Jesus the disciples can "do nothing" (15:5c).

But if believing in Jesus results in abiding in him (passive), what is it that distinguishes abiding from believing (which is the basis of the first prayer promise cluster)? Two things may be noted: first, abiding reflects the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the disciples and Jesus (15:4; cf. 8:31, 35), whereas believing is not a reciprocal act. Abiding implies intimacy, obedience, and longevity; believing emphasizes understanding, receiving, and relying upon. Second, abiding conveys the importance of bearing fruit, of demonstrating perseverance. In John 15:16 Jesus qualifies their fruit by saying that it must abide or endure. In the first half of the book of John, Jesus is presented as suspicious of mere human faith in him, particularly that which seeks him merely for the signs he performs (e.g., 2:23–25; 6:25–30, 60–66; cf. esp. 8:31–59). True faith, according to John's Gospel, is that which receives the Son as having been sent by the Father (and who is therefore united with the Father) and that which endures, especially in the face of opposition (15:18–16:4a; cf. 1:10–13; 9:22, 34; 12:42; 17:14, 15).

87 Untergassmair, Im Namen Jesu Beten, 72, notes that the phrase "my words" is found elsewhere in John to refer to the revelatory work of the Son.
88 Cf. 20:31. This point is reinforced if πίστεύετε is the correct reading of the controverted textual variant.
b. Exegesis of John 15:7

7 ἐὰν μείνητε ἐν ἐμοί
cαὶ τὰ ῥήματά μου ἐν ὑμῖν μείνῃ, [A]
δὲ ἐὰν θέλητε αἰτήσασθε, [B (omits B2)]
cαὶ γεννήσεται ὑμῖν. [C]

Having covered the thematic content of "abiding" in the preceding section, it remains to make a few comments about this prayer promise. Firstly, verse 7 comes at the end of a series of similarly structured promises/commands of Jesus. In John 15:3–6 the pattern of Jesus’ instructions is as follows:

If the disciples abide in Jesus
→ then Jesus will abide in the disciples
→ and the disciples will bear fruit.

In John 15:7 the pattern is as follows:

If the disciples abide in Jesus (and his words abide in them)
[→ Jesus' reciprocal abiding is assumed]
→ then the disciples may ask whatever they want and it will happen.

In verse 7, therefore, the promise of answered prayer may be said to replace the promise of bearing fruit in verses 3–6. Both bearing fruit and having prayers answered in Jesus' name derive from the primary condition of abiding in Jesus and its necessary partner (his words abiding in the believer). That is, continuing to believe in Jesus as the revelation of the Father (= keeping his commandments, 14:15) is the basis of the prayer promise of verse 7. The fruit of answered prayer flows out of the abundant life that the disciples have now by faith in Jesus (cf. 10:10).

Secondly, abiding in Jesus and bearing fruit has the same ultimate goal as asking in Jesus' name did in John 14:13–14: that the Father might be glorified (15:8). The glorification of the Father forms the ultimate condition of all prayer (cf. 12:27–28; 5:37; 8:54; 13:31, 32; 17:1, 4, 5, 24; Matt 6:9 par. Luke 11:2b).

This prayer promise does not give specific guidance on what kinds of prayers are to be offered. The context mentions both "more" fruit (vv. 2, 5, 8) and fruit that

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89 The previous prayer promise (14:13–14) also built upon the syntax of the preceding context (14:12).
90 Schnackenburg, St John, 3:101. Ashton, The Fourth Gospel, 431–434, is correct in identifying the plural "commandments" as referring to the demand for faith in Jesus as the revelation of the Father (14:1).
"lasts" (or, "abides," v. 16). "More fruit" (v. 2) or "much fruit" (vv. 5, 8) suggest more disciples and therefore the fruit of evangelism (i.e., confessing Jesus' "name," e.g., 1:12–13; 3:16; 17:3; 20:30–31; 1 John 2:24–25; 4:2, 15; 5:5). "Abiding" fruit suggests deeper maturity or perhaps the expression of sacrificial love, as the next section will show. However, choosing between these options is not necessary as they are both inseparable and can quite easily be combined (e.g., more disciples who abide). For the present, however, it can be assumed that the kind of fruit produced should in some way guide the kind of prayer prayed and answer expected, though not exclusively so: "whatever you wish" (ο ἐὰν θέλητε) must retain its natural meaning.

c. Exegesis of John 15:16

16 οὖχ ὑμεῖς μὲ ἐξελέξασθε, ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς καὶ ἔθηκα ὑμᾶς ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑπάγητε καὶ καρπὸν φέρητε καὶ ὁ καρπὸς ὑμῶν μένη, [A]

16 υ ὑμεῖς μὲ ἐξελέξασθε καὶ καρπὸν φέρητε καὶ ὁ καρπὸς ὑμῶν μένη, [A]

ἵνα ὁ τι ἄν αἰτήσῃτε τὸν πατέρα ἐν τῷ ὅνομάτι μου [B]

καὶ ὁ καρπὸς ὑμῶν μένη, [B]

δοῦ ὑμῖν. [C]

The prayer promise of John 15:16 enhances the "fruit bearing" imagery of 15:1–8 with election–love language from verses 9–15. This prayer promise concludes a two-pronged purpose clause (ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑπάγητε καὶ καρπὸν φέρητε καὶ ὁ καρπὸς ὑμῶν μένη). The purpose of the disciples' election and appointment as Jesus' "friends" (i.e., recipients of his revelation or love) is, firstly, to bear fruit and, secondly, that their fruit should abide. The purpose of bearing abiding fruit is that "whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you" (ἵνα ὁ τι ἄν αἰτήσῃτε τὸν πατέρα ἐν τῷ ὅνομάτι μου δοῦ ὑμῖν). At first sight this prayer promise appears similar to the preceding one (15:7). However, this time the basis of bearing fruit is not that Jesus abides in the disciples and they in him (compare 15:1–7), but that Jesus has chosen them (ἐγὼ ἐξελεξάμην ὑμᾶς; cf. 13:18) through revealing the Father to them (15:15). This probably equates to the initiating work of Jesus' word referred to in verse 3: "You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you." In John 15:14–16, the disciples are Jesus' chosen friends whom he loves (cf. Deut 7:6–11; 10:15; Hos 11:1; Mal 1:2) and for whom he will lay down his life (John 15:13; 13:34, 35; 10:11, 15, 17). In John's Gospel, the disciples' election is grounded in the initiating love of the Father for the Son: "As the Father has loved me,
so also have I loved you” (15:9; cf. 5:20; 3:35; 10:17; 17:24). The love of the Father for the Son is the originating love upon which all other love—and hence any abiding in that love—must be founded.\footnote{Segovia, Farewell, 148, calls it a "chain of love" that extends from the Father to the Son to the disciples.}

However, love must have its response. If the proper response of Jesus to the love of the Father is to keep his commandments and abide in his love, then the proper response of the disciples to the love of the Son is to keep his commandments and so to abide in his love (John 15:9, 10). The commandment that Jesus has kept and that the disciples must keep is the \textit{same}: to love to the point of giving up one's life for the other person (vv. 12–13; cf. v. 17; 10:11, 15, 17–18; 13:34–35). In this way the disciples will abide in Jesus' and the Father's love and prove to be his friends (15:13–15) or disciples (v. 8).

The benefits of keeping the Son's commandments—and hence abiding in his and the Father's love\footnote{Barrett, John, 475–476, notes that the present tense of \(\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\alpha\nu\) is used for the Father's love of the Son and the aorist tense for Jesus' love of the disciples.}—are abiding fruit and prayers sure of answer (15:16).\footnote{The introduction of mutual love as a "commandment" here harks back to 13:34–35, and is distinct from the "words" or "commandments" in 14:15–31 and 15:1–11, which refer to believing in Jesus (e.g., 14:1). There now appear to be two commandments: believing in Jesus and loving one another (cf. 1 John 3:24). Both are said to be emulating Jesus' obedience to the Father. For discussion of source- and form-critical issues of John 14 and 15, see Ashton, The Fourth Gospel, 431–434.} These two benefits were also linked in the context of John 15:7, where it was noted that the fruit to be requested was either more disciples or more mature disciples (or both?). The prayer promise of John 15:16 also suggests a request that is to be made of the Father: fruit that \textit{remains} (\(\delta\; \kappa\alpha\rho\pi\delta\varsigma\; \omicron\mu\omicron\omicron\nu\; \mu\epsilon\nu\eta\)). Some scholars think this fruit is a missionary harvest,\footnote{So, e.g., Carson, John, 523; Köstenberger, John, 460.} citing John 4:35–38 and 12:24. The use of the adjective "much" in the previous section (15:1–8), the hint of the disciples' appointment as apostles (\(\kappa\alpha\iota\; \epsilon\theta\eta\kappa\alpha\; \omicron\mu\omicron\varsigma\)), and the apparent instruction that "you should go" (\(\iota\nu\alpha\; \omicron\mu\epsilon\xi\zeta\; \omicron\pi\acute{a}\gamma\nu\tau\epsilon\), 15:16) all support this inference.\footnote{Schnackenburg, St John, 3:111, 422 n. 71, is correct in his assessment that \(\omicron\pi\acute{a}\gamma\nu\tau\epsilon\) is not a command to go but an "evocative imperative" (cf. 4:16, 9:7; Matt 28:19–20).} Perhaps the importance of keeping Jesus' commandments to believe in him (14:1, 15, 20, 23, 24,
29, 31; 15:3, 7, 10) renders further support. Other scholars—on the basis of John 15:12, 13, 17—argue that the "fruit that remains" is a moral/relational action, primarily expressed in the command to love one another. As indicated in the previous section, a hard and fast distinction between the two views goes against Johannine theology that strongly ties evangelistic outcomes to the command to love sacrificially (e.g., 13:34, 35; compare 10:14–16; 17:20–21, 23). Indeed, separating the evangelistic word from loving deed would imply the same could be done with Jesus' words and works, which would contradict the the thrust and structure of the book of signs. The abiding fruit of which Jesus speaks in John 15:16 come about both through the proclamation of Jesus' words and the demonstration of his actions, which form an inseparable and mutually reinforcing pair in the Father's revelation of himself—Jesus says he was commanded to do both (15:10; 10:14–18). The goal of this testimony is that others may believe in the Son as the full and final revelation of the Father and be incorporated into the vine and bear abiding fruit. Prayer for such a goal would also include prayer for the means to it.

**d. Conclusion**

The basis of the prayer promises in John 15:7 and 16 is Jesus' abiding in the disciples or his electing love of the disciples, which derives from the Father's love of him and his love for the Father (cf. 14:10–11). The response to the love of the Father and the Son should be twofold: to abide in Christ through keeping his word and to love one another sacrificially. The outcome of the disciples' twofold response is a twofold promise of fruit that will remain and petitions that will be answered. The prayer

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98 "Love" in John has more than an internal or moral dimension. The climax of the Farewell Discourse (John 17) stresses the lost and even hostile condition of the world in which the disciples will soon live (e.g., 17:11–12, 14–16), into which they have been sent (17:18), for which Jesus sanctifies himself (17:19), and from whom "those who believe in me through their message" (17:20) must ultimately come. Furthermore, the Gospel of John has been written that the world might believe in the Son and have life (20:30–31; 10:10) and thereby experience the Father's love (3:16). Indeed, the choosing of the disciples took place when Jesus "made known" (ἐγνώρισε, 15:15) what he heard from the Father to them.

99 The signs in John's Gospel (i.e., Jesus' "works") require the book itself as their means of effectiveness and so must embrace Jesus' words of interpretation recorded here (20:30–31).
promises of John 15:7 and 16 depend upon or are results of the response of faith and
love and yet are ultimately given by the Father who has chosen, loved, and sent the
Son in the first place. The disciples may also be assured that the Father and the Son
abide in them in so responding; that is, that they have eternal life. The goal of lives
that bear fruit and answered prayer is that the Father be glorified (15:8). The content
of requests inferred by the second prayer-promise cluster is governed by what will
bear fruit that remains—to be understood both numerically and qualitatively. Such
guidance is hardly a restriction, however, since abiding in Jesus is life in all its
fullness. Finally, the instruction to "ask whatever you wish" (15:7) resonates with
both the enthusiasm and the everyday focus of the "ask [...] seek [...] knock"

5. Prayer Cluster III (John 16:23, 24, 26–27)

a. The Literary and Theological Context of John 16:23, 24, 26–27
The third cluster of prayer promises in the Farewell Discourse is the most focussed
and complete of the three and can be considered their conclusion. The final section
of the Farewell Discourse (16:4b–33) returns in a more extended and detailed fashion
to themes introduced in its first section (13:31–14:31). Jesus' departure to the Father
(16:5, 7, 16–19, 27, 28)—with its positive and negative consequences for the
disciples and the world—forms the theme of the section. The disciples' self-concern
and confusion over Jesus' declarations (13:6, 8, 36; 14:5, 8, 22) again provide the foil
against which Jesus gives further explication about his departure (16:17).

John 16:4b–33 can be broken into two parts: verses 4b–15 focus on the
Paraclete's ministry in Jesus' absence, and verses 16–33 concentrate on the details
and benefits of Jesus' departure, including the final benefit of open petition to the
Father (vv. 23–24, 26–27). See Segovia, Farewell, 213–224, who breaks the unit into three (vv. 4b–15, 16–
24, 25–33), based on the questions or declarations of the disciples. Brown, John,
2:545–547, breaks the unit at v. 15, but cautions readers not to separate the first unit
from the second, for the work of the Paraclete is central to the benefits that are
unveiled in the second part.

So also Brown, John, 2:729.
καὶ ὃψεσθέ με.

"A little while,
and you will no longer see me,
and again a little while,
and you will see me" (John 16:16, NRSV).

Jesus here breaks the disciples' experience of his departure into three stages with two gaps:

[Stage 1: Seeing him now]
   Gap 1: mikróν
[Stage 2: No longer seeing him]
   Gap 2: mikróν
[Stage 3: Seeing him again]

The first "little while" refers to the time period from the present moment to Jesus' crucifixion, death, and burial. The second "little while" refers to the period between his burial and resurrection. 102 Because the "little while" is connected with Jesus' departure, it has strong eschatological and Christological associations in John. In John 7:33–34, the "little while" referred to the opportunity "the Jews" had to take advantage of Jesus' presence (cf. 12:35–36). In 13:33, the disciples are issued with a similar warning (cf. 14:9). The "little while" therefore marks a radical severance (note οὖ δόνασθε, 13:33) of Jesus from the world that will come about, presumably, through the "hour" of the glorification of the Son of Man (13:31–32; 16:32). John 14:19–20 clarifies the process a little:

In a little while (μικρόν) the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day, you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me and I in you (NRSV).

There will be a time (μικρόν)—presumably caused by the "world"—when Jesus will not be with them; but his absence will not be permanent. Rather, Jesus' departure will have eternal benefits (i.e., life and mutual abiding in Jesus and the Father). John 16:16 completes the exposition of the "little while," signifying that Jesus' departure has as its intention that, after the second "little while" (μικρόν), the disciples will see

102 Köstenberger, John, 474; Lincoln, St John, 422. Brown, John, 2:729–730, concludes that a whole-gospel reading necessitates the inclusion of the reception of the Paraclete.
him again, and *that* seeing will be of such a kind that their present seeing (i.e., understanding) of both him and the Father will appear pale.

The major benefit of Jesus' departure and return for the disciples will be a knowledge of the unity of the Father and the Son (cf. 14:9–11) and their own participation (by faith) in this unity (14:19–20, 23; cf. John 17:11, 21). The movement from departure to return, from sorrow to joy, from seeing to not seeing and back to seeing again, is the movement from death to life, not only for Jesus but also for the disciples.\(^{103}\) The physical seeing of Jesus again at the resurrection is but the beginning of "life" in the new age since Jesus not only returns to them but also to the Father who sent him and to the glory set aside for him (16:5, 28; 17:1, 4, 5; cf. 14:12 and section 3.a. above). The second "little while" (μικρόν) of John 16:16, therefore, coincides with the inauguration of the era of the Spirit (7:39),\(^ {104}\) the Paraclete whom Jesus will send from the Father to remain with the disciples (14:16, 26; 15:26–27; 16:7–15, who is the life-giving Spirit of John 6:63; cf. 3:6).\(^ {105}\)

The disciples' confusion and misplaced optimism (16:17–19, 29–30) will be replaced by three benefits that arise from Jesus' departure and return to the Father: (1) joy that cannot be taken away (vv. 20–22); (2) the absence of questions about his

\(^{103}\) The analogy of the woman giving birth may also suggest a cosmic regeneration (16:20–22). Discussions of v. 22 in scholarship tend to focus on the apocalyptic aspects of Jesus' language (e.g., Brown, *John*, 2:731–33; Moloney, *John*, 449). However, it is hard to ignore the echoes that the birth imagery has with Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus (2:23–3:11), which has its roots in covenant renewal and new creation concepts (e.g., Ezek 36:26–28).

\(^{104}\) The eschatological note is sounded by the repeated introduction ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ (vv. 23, 26), which signals not the final judgement (as it does elsewhere, e.g., Matt 24:36 par. Mark 13:32), but the time after the disciples see Jesus again.

\(^{105}\) Brown, *John*, 2:729, is doubtful that the resurrection appearances of Jesus sufficiently account for the unbridled joy of the disciples. But, as v. 16 makes clear, the main issue in the unit is that the disciples will see Jesus again. Joy is a consequence of "seeing" Jesus again and cannot be separated from it. If the verb "to see" is taken into account (vv. 1, 5, 6, 8, 12, 14, 18, 25, 29)—as well as the implied occasions of "seeking" Jesus (vv. 19–20, 26–27)—the resurrection appearances of John 20 are more than sufficient to account for Jesus' earlier statements. Brown is hesitant to give a literal meaning to the verb to "see" in the resurrection narratives of John. He regards "seeing" as experiencing Jesus' presence, which occurs through the presence of the Holy Spirit. However, this is difficult to square with 16:25, which is based upon a comparison of speaking to the disciples before and after a coming "hour" (in parables versus openly).
departure and return (v. 23a),\(^{106}\) and (3) the assurance that petitions to the Father in Jesus' name will be granted (vv. 23b–24).\(^{107}\) In short, the disciples will have a new and dynamic relationship with Jesus (v. 23a) and with the Father (vv. 23–28), that will engender an unbridled joy in their hearts (v. 22). It would appear from the amount of space dedicated to it (vv. 23–27), that the final benefit of Jesus' departure—prayers answered by the Father in Jesus' name—is even more elevated than the earlier prayer promises (John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16), and is a key result of Jesus' mission into the world (v. 28).

b. Exegesis of John 16:23, 24, 26–27

23 Καὶ ἐν ἐκείνη τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐμὲ οὐκ ἐρωτήσετε οὐδὲν. άμήν ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν, [A1]

δὲν τι αἰτήσητε τὸν πατέρα [B1]\(^1\) ἐν τῷ ὄνομάτι μου [B\(^2\)]

dώσει ὑμῖν.\(^{108}\) [C1]

24 ἔως ἂρτι [A2]

οὐκ ἢτίσατε οὐδὲν ἐν τῷ ὄνομάτι μου· [B\(^2\)2]

αἰτεῖτε\(^{109}\) [B\(^1\)2] καὶ λήμψεσθε,\(^{110}\) [C2]

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\(^{106}\) Brown, *John*, 2:722, may be correct in connecting this new knowledge with the disciples' possession of the Spirit (14:26; 16:12–15; cf. 1 John 2:27). Discussion over whether the asking in v. 23a is looking backward to the disciples' question about the "little while" of vv. 16–22 or looking forward to the asking in prayer (vv. 23b–27) should be resolved in favour of the former for two reasons. Firstly, although arguments on the basis of verb stem are hard to sustain in John, it appears that John uses αἰτεῖν with requests of people or the Father, or people who speak about Jesus' prayer life, while ἐρωτάν is used for questions by the disciples to Jesus or by Jesus to refer to his petitions. In the present case, Jesus would be referring to the disciples' questions asked previously (vv. 17–19). Secondly, if v. 23a refers to what follows, then the previous prayer promises in John 14:13, 14 (and 15:7, 16) are contradicted. The intention of this text is not to prohibit requests of Jesus but to highlight that the disciples can make requests *directly* to the Father. So also Lincoln, *St John*, 524–525; see Moloney, *John*, 448, 452, for an opposing view.


\(^{108}\) A well-supported textual variant in verse 23 places δώσει ὑμῖν before ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου (*\(^{\text{P}}\)\(^{\text{vid}}\) B C\(^*\) L Δ / 844 pc sa ac\(^2\)), leading to the translation "whatever you ask the Father he will give you in my name." Brown, *John*, 2:723, argues that this is the correct reading, noting a similar pattern in 14:26: (ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, δὲ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὄνοματί μου, "the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name"); so also Schnackenburg, *St John*, 3:160. This instance is not a conditional sentence, however, so the parallel is not complete. The support of the NA\(^{27}\) reading is strong and wide-spread (*\(^{\text{P}}\)\(^{\text{22}}\)\(^{\text{vid}}\) A C\(^3\) D W Θ Ψ β 1\(^{13}\) 1. [33] θαλατ[ρ] sy pho bo). While this is the easier reading the alternative could have come about under the influence of 14:26 or, more likely 16:24a; so Lincoln, *St John*, 416 n. 1.
As noted in the introduction to this section, these prayer promises are specifically tied to the era when the disciples will see Jesus again after his resurrection (v. 24a, ἐκείνης τῇ ἡμέρᾳ; vv. 23, 26, ἐκείνη τῇ ἡμέρᾳ; v. 25, ἔρχεται ὥρα). As noted in section 3 above, John 14:12d also states that the basis of the disciples’ “greater works” is the return of Jesus to the Father (ὅτι ἐγώ πρὸς τὸν πατέρα πορεύομαι). The effectiveness of prayer in John’s Gospel is empowered by Jesus’ resurrection from the dead and his return to the Father.

In the present passage Jesus claims that the era inaugurated by his resurrection and return to the Father will be a time of plain speech about the Father (παρθένος) and not parables and mystery (16:25). Brown is correct to attribute this clarity ultimately to the presence of the Holy Spirit (cf. 14:25–26), but this does not seem to be the point in verse 25. The παρθένος of verse 25 does not belong the disciples’

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109 The second prayer promise in v. 24 uses the present tense imperative of the verb αἰτεῖν as against the aorist found in 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:24 and 26. While some suggest the verb here should be understood in an iterative way, the other prayer instructions in the aorist tense surely do not exclude persistent praying. Both Brown, John, 2:723, and, Leon L. Morris, The Gospel according to John (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1995), 628, say the present tense implies persistence. See earlier comments on Luke 11:9 par. Matt 7:7.


111 Although Jesus in John 16:25 appears to be addressing future communication between Jesus and the disciples, the fact that it is sandwiched between sections on prayer in Jesus’ name (vv. 23, 24, 26) cannot be ignored. The concern of Brown, John, 2:734, about whether verse 25 is out of place will receive comment in the exegesis below.

112 Brown, John, 2:735.
hearing or understanding but Jesus' speaking. These are, of course, inseparable, but the implication of the new era of openness to which Jesus draws attention here is that the pre-resurrection era is one of veiled communication on Jesus' part (16:12–16; 14:26–27). The relationship that Jesus and the disciples will have "in a little while" will be constituted by his plain speaking to them on the one hand and their open praying to the Father in his name on the other (16:26–27). Up until this time the disciples have not prayed to the Father; instead Jesus has prayed to him on their behalf (vv. 23, 26–27; 17:9, 11, 15; cf. Luke 22:32; 10:21–22 par. Matt 11:25–27). After Jesus' departure—indeed, on the basis of that departure—they themselves will pray to the Father (v. 27), certain of their access (i.e., success in petition) because

113 The earlier focus of John's Gospel on "openness" is "the Jews'" hardness against Jesus' message (7:3, 17; 8:46; 10:25) in spite of his openness (7:26; 10:24; 18:20). In 1 John 3:22 and 5:14–15 παρηγόρησις refers to the confidence believers have of being heard in prayer because of their confession of Jesus as the Christ and their love of one another. See Schnackenburg, St John, 3:160–161, and, Thompson, "Intercession," 225–245, for further reflection.

114 Both in the disciples' presence (14:23) and in the ministry of the Paraclete in and through them (14:16, 26; 15:26–27; 16:14).

115 Brown, John, 2:733–734, again places the Paraclete as the presence within the disciples that lies at the heart of this prayer unity. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the Paraclete in any of the prayer texts. The role of the Spirit in Johannine prayer is discussed by Cullmann, Prayer, 90–98, who restricts his discussion to the first half of the gospel. Direct access to the Father—such as Jesus has—is the heart of Johannine prayer. To place the Spirit as an intermediary would diminish this.

116 See Thompson, The God of the Gospel of John, 57–100, for the Johannine use of "Father." No detailed comment has been made in the present chapter about Jesus' use of "Father" as a title or address of God in John, as has been done with its use in the Lord's Prayer (ch. II) and the Gethsemane prayer (ch. IV). It is not proposed to offer a full study on this topic, but, a few comments should be made: (1) as is well-known, the Fourth Gospel uses the word "Father" (Πατήρ) for the divine being more often than any of the gospels (some 120 times). In a detailed study of this phenomenon, Thompson, The God of the Gospel of John, 50–55, 57–100, convincingly argues that this title is inseparable from the unity of the Father and the Son in the divine work of giving life; cf. Meyer, "The Father", 264. (2) The disciples are not instructed to pray to "your Father" or "our Father" as in the Synoptic Gospels (e.g., Matt 5:44–45; 6:6, 8, 9, 14, 15; 7:11; 23:9; and pars.) or even to use the bare unadorned title "Father" (e.g., Luke 11:2b). It is only after the resurrection and return of Jesus to the Father that the disciples should call upon God as "Father" (16:23–24, 25–27; 20:17), and then it is always connected with the mediating revelation of the Son ("in my name," 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26). (3) Jesus alone has an unmediated relationship with the Father because he alone is the "Son" of the "Father" (e.g., 8:39–56). The disciples are "children of God" (τέκνα θεοῦ; 1:12; 11:52; cf. 13:33; 1 John 3:1–2, 10; 5:2), through faith in Jesus' name (3:18) and through the regenerating power of God revealed in that name (1:12–13).
they ask in Jesus' name. As Jesus' work as an earthly intermediary comes to an end an open relationship between the Father and the disciples will be established.

Jesus' ministry is transitional, preparing [the disciples] for the great day when they will permanently approach God as Father, based on the revelation of him given by the Son.\footnote{Paul W. Barnett, \textit{John: The Shepherd King} (Sydney South, N.S.W.: Aquila, 2005), 227.}

Praying to the \textit{Father} will have two qualities. Firstly, it will be \textit{effective} like Jesus' prayer was effective ("ask and you will receive," v. 24; cf. 11:41b–42; cf. Matt 7:7–8; Luke 11:9–10). Readers of John have already heard testimony to Jesus as a successful petitioner. In John 9:30–33, the man healed of life-long blindness attributes his cure to Jesus' successful prayer. In John 11:21–22, Martha confirms this witness:

\begin{quote}
21 Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that God will \textit{give you whatever you ask of him} (NRSV, emphasis added).\footnote{It is possible that Martha is here making a request of Jesus to raise her brother, but most commentators are, in the light of her statement in 11:39, dubious that she is doing so (e.g., Brown, \textit{John}, 1:433–434; Schnackenburg, \textit{St John}, 2:329). The verse is a clear reference to Jesus' petitions.}
\end{quote}

Although Jesus is never explicitly portrayed in private prayer in John 1–12 (though see section A.2 above for hints), both the man born blind and Martha are confident that he does pray and that he does so successfully (cf. Jas 5:16c). The allusion in Martha's statements to the Johannine prayer promises in general is unmistakable (esp. John 15:16; 16:23; cf. Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13; Jas 1:5–6; 1 John 3:22).

The second quality about prayer in Jesus' name is that its effectiveness originates not from the intensity or purity of the disciples' faith in or prayer to God (cf. Mark 9:22–24, 29; 11:22–29), but from the Father's love for them in response to their love for and belief in Jesus as the one whom the Father sent into the world (γὰρ, v. 27; cf. 17:6–8, 14a, 18, 23). That is, successful prayer is a fruit of the mission of the Son on behalf of the Father and petitions in line with this mission may be confident of answer as well (cf. 15:7, 16).

The foundations laid in the previous two prayer-promise clusters (14:13,14; 15:7, 16) are captured within the third as well: those who receive the Son by faith (14:10–11, 12–13) and keep his commands (14:15, 21, 23, 24; 15:10, 12, 17)—in
short, who abide in him (15:4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10)—may be assured of the Father's love and hence of the Father's promise to answer their prayers (16:23–27). And there is to be no doubt about the origin of answers to prayer: it is the Father himself (ἁτός γὰρ ὁ πατήρ) who loves them (present tense, φιλεῖ; cf. 14:27), just as he loves the Son who keeps his command[s] (ἀγαπᾷν, 3:35; 8:42; 10:17; φιλεῖν, 5:20).

Finally, this new relationship between the disciples and the Father is given for a purpose: that the disciples' joy might be full (v. 24, ἡ χαρὰ ὡμῶν ἡ πεπληρομένη; cf. 15:11). This joy will eclipse the sorrow they feel in their hearts over Jesus' departure (compare 16:6, ἡ λύπη πεπλήρωκεν ὡμῶν τὴν καρδίαν, and 16:22, καὶ χαρὴσεται ὡμῶν ἡ καρδία; cf. 14:28). No one (i.e., the world, v. 20; cf. 17:13) will take away this joy (cf. 10:10). Jesus secures this outcome through his prayer in John 17, reminding listeners that the joy of which he speaks is his joy (17:12–13; cf. 15:11). Open prayer to the Father in Jesus' name will prolong the joy they had upon his resurrection (16:16d; 20:20b—even for those who were not there to see it, 20:28). As with Jesus' joy, the disciples' joy will also be experienced in the context of a hostile "world" (17:13–16; 15:18–16:4a, 20).

c. Conclusion
The third prayer-promise cluster in John 16:23, 24, and 26–27, has a climactic place in the Farewell Discourse and among the prayer promises as a group. Returning to the theme of his departure, Jesus indicates that the era inaugurated by his death, resurrection and return to the Father will not be marked by sorrow, but by a new, joyful, open and confident relationship with the Father. Confident prayer is a fruit of Jesus' mission and is intended to forward that mission in his absence. Jesus' own joy was full in the knowledge that he fulfilled the Father's will by giving the Father's name to the disciples who have accepted it. Their acceptance of the Father's name as revealed by the Son is the reason why the Father hears their prayers; this is nothing other than asking in Jesus' name (14:12–14).

The third prayer-promise cluster enhances the handing over of the mission from Jesus to the disciples, a transfer that was within the plan of the Father and the Son in the first place, as is made plain in Jesus' prayer of John 17. Successful prayer is grounded in Jesus' name (three times, 16:23, 24, 26), but it is also a privilege that must be exercised: Jesus' tells the disciples to "ask" five times in this unit while "giving" or "receiving" is allocated only two mentions. The emphasis on asking—like that found in the unconditional Synoptic Prayer promises (Matt 7:7–8 par. Luke 11:9–10)—reflects the disciples' need to be emboldened about their future without Jesus. Apart from praying in Jesus' name, no condition upon prayer is laid down in this context. Prayer is a benefit given by the Father in response to their love for the Son; he will withhold nothing from them.

6. Conclusions to the Prayer Promises of John 14–16
The prayer promises of John 14–16 follow a consistent syntactical pattern, share a common vocabulary, and display a unified theological foundation. Their repetition in Jesus' final words indicates that expectant, petitionary prayer is a key part of the ongoing life of the disciples and their spiritual descendants. The above exegesis may be distilled into the following points: (1) the return of the Son to the Father will inaugurate a new era in which petitions for "anything" (including "greater works" than Jesus') may be expectantly offered to the Father (14:12–14; 16:23–24, 26–27); (2) the certainty of the disciples' petitions being heard by the Father is ensured by their being requested in the "name" of Jesus, that is, by believing that in Jesus the Father is fully revealed and that Jesus and the Father are one (14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26). The unity of the Father and the Son, demonstrated in Jesus' obedience to the Father's command and the Father's love, is also one in which the disciples abide and for which they constantly strive (15:9–10). (3) The source of the success of the disciples' petitions is not their obedience, but the electing love of the Father and the Son for the disciples (15:3, 9, 15–16). Indeed, the promises to petitions offered in Jesus' name are usually combined with other benefits that are beyond human attainment (i.e., greater works [14:12–13], abiding fruit [15:7, 16]; and, inextinguishable joy [16:22, 24]).

(4) The proper response to the electing love of the Father and the Son is twofold: to abide in Christ and to love one another.

See also the promises of 1 John, which are fruit of "confidence" before God (3:21–22; 5:13–15) that arises from believing that Jesus Christ is the Son and in obeying the command of love.
This is the soil from which answered prayer will grow, for apart from Jesus the disciples can do nothing (15:5). (5) Petitions offered by the disciples within this framework will result in the Father being glorified in the Son (14:13; 15:8). Since the mutual glorification of the Father and the Son is the ultimate purpose of the mission of the Son in John (12:23, 27–28; 17:1, 4, 5, 10), such a result will serve to deepen the foundation upon which petitions are requested and lead to fullness of joy (16:24). (6) Petitions that are guided by the purpose of the Father and the Son to bring life into the world (3:16; 10:10; 20:30–31) and by the conditions of prayer (i.e., the glorification of the Father, believing and abiding in the Son, and loving one another) may be assured of answer. But petitions need not be restricted to such items, as the repetition of "whatever" and "anything (you wish)" in the prayer promises indicates. Jesus' own prayers (9:35; 11:23, 42a; cf. 6:11, 23) and works in John's Gospel embrace a wide spectrum of life and there is no reason that the disciples' prayers should be limited to "spiritual" benefits.

The distinctiveness of the Johannine prayer promises is best seen by comparing them to the findings of the study of their Synoptic counterparts (ch. V above). Although the promises in John 14–16 share the vocabulary of both unconditional (compare John 16:24 with Matt 7:8 par. Luke 11:10) and, to a lesser extent, conditional Synoptic prayer promises, the Johannine prayer promises branch out in their own directions. Firstly, with respect to God's character, the goodness and power of God that undergird the Synoptic prayer promises have been replaced by the union of the Father and the Son, which is both pre-incarnate and forged through Jesus' complete obedience to the Father's will (John 4:34). This union is grounded in a union of love between the Father and the Son—seen especially in the Son's sacrifice of his own life. "Generous" is too feeble a word to describe that love, but that is the kind of love from which the Father answers requests made in his Son's name.

Secondly, where the Synoptic prayer promises infer the mediation of Jesus by placing him as the agent of healings and exorcisms, the declarer of the prayer promises, and the conjoint object of faith, the Johannine prayer promises construct a fully-developed mediation of the Son at the centre of all prayer. To pray in Jesus' "name" is the most obvious demonstration of this (14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26), but it is reinforced in each Johannine prayer promise in slightly different ways: the motive of prayer is that the Father might be glorified in the Son (14:13); the Son...
answers prayer requests (14:13, 14); and, one must abide in the Son and fulfil the
Son's commands (15:7, 16). The essential condition for successful prayer in the
Johannine prayer promises is asking in Jesus' name.

Thirdly, the "already–not yet" eschatological tension that—within the salvation
plan of God—provided the framework for the promise–restriction tension of petition
in the Synoptic Gospels is not as strongly accentuated in John. The new era opened
up through the completion of the Father's work by the Son is one that enables the
disciples to do "greater works" than Jesus and one in which "anything" may be
requested. Nevertheless, although there is a strong emphasis on the "already" in
Johannine eschatology, the context of the third prayer promise revealed more than a
hint of the "not yet" (16:20–22). Elsewhere in John's Gospel, Jesus warns the
disciples of exclusion from the "world" and/or the local Jewish community (15:18–
16:4a; 17:14). As Jesus says in John 16:33: "in the world you have [present tense]
tribulation" (ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ θλίψει ἔχετε). The threat of the evil one is also raised
in John 17:15 and 13:2, 27. These threats echo similar ones found in the Synoptic
Gospels about the Great Tribulation and its effects.

Fourthly, while the Synoptic prayer-promise conditions of faith (Mark 9:22–
Luke 11:4; Matt 6:14–15 par. Mark 11:25) are present in John, they have been
heavily reshaped by the idea of the union of the Father and the Son with the disciples
(cf. John 14:13; 15:16) and the related commandment to "love one another as I have
loved you" (13:34, 35; 15:12, 17).

A final difference between the Johannine and Synoptic prayer promises
concerns their content. In the Synoptic Gospels, requests for mundane matters (esp.
food) became pathways to the extension of the kingdom of God and the provision of
the Spirit (e.g., the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer and Luke 11:5–13). In John's
Gospel, mundane matters are absent from the prayer-promise context, and elsewhere
in the gospel. The quest in John's Gospel is not for daily needs but for "food that will
last" (6:27, 35, 50, 51; cf. 4:13–14).121 Nevertheless, the repeated "whatever" and
"whatever you wish" of the prayer promises must not be evacuated of its natural

meaning. (Perhaps the theme of θαυμάζει replaces the Synoptic theme of πειρασμός, which affects the whole of life and not only "spiritual" areas.)

With respect to the thesis question about the promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer, the prayer promises of the Fourth Gospel offer repeated assurance of answer to petitionary prayer so long as it has, at its heart, faith in Jesus as the complete revelation of the Father, love of Jesus in obedience to his words (and therefore love of one another that is rooted in the love of the Father for the Son), and hope and joy kindled by the return of Jesus to the Father and the new era opened up through him (as well as the expectation of his return). The particular emphasis of the Johannine prayer promises is that, by abiding in Jesus, the disciples will continue Jesus’ work of bearing fruit in the mission of the Father and the Son. Promise and limitation in petitionary prayer are held together in the Johannine portrait of the ascended Son. The prayer promises, along with their explicit and implicit conditions, find their ground in Jesus’ "name." The frustration of prayer in the present time is not something that is considered by the Johannine prayer promises, which appear designed to ensure that the disciples pray with confidence to the Father on the basis of Jesus’ exaltation, even though opposition will arise.

D. Limitations upon Petitionary Prayer in the Gospel of John (John 12:27–28)

The investigation of the tension between promises to petition and restrictions upon it in the Fourth Gospel has so far focussed on the prayer promises in the Farewell Discourse (14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26–27), which display a confident expectation of being heard by the Father when petitions are offered in Jesus’ name. The eschatological context of petition in the Gospel of John is that the Son has ascended to the Father and a new era of prayer has begun in his "name." Apart from the conditions of faith in Jesus as the revealed Son of God and sacrificial love of one another, the prayer promises also implied that petition would be offered in the context of opposition and "tribulation," of a kind similar to that found in the Synoptic Gospels, but perhaps without the same strength. Jesus’ continued mediation for the disciples is more deliberately portrayed in John than it is in the Synoptic Gospels (note how 16:33 is placed before Jesus’ intercessory prayer in ch. 17).

Unlike the Synoptic Gospels, John does not contain examples or teaching that explicitly restrict petitionary prayer (like the Lord's Prayer and Jesus’ Gethsemane
Prayer; cf. chs. II and IV above). Jesus' prayer in John 12:27–28 is perhaps the only clear example of a strong prayer restriction in John's Gospel. Here Jesus, confronted with the "hour," refuses to even ask for the hour to be taken away. In the introduction it was noted that Miller saw in this text an example of how Christian prayer had subordinated its own wishes to those of the will of God. In the remainder of this section this complex and important text will be investigated before conclusions are drawn on the nature of its limitation upon petitionary prayer. The Greek text of the petition may be simply laid out as follows:

\[
\text{Νῦν ἡ ψυχὴ μου τεταρακται, καὶ τί εἴπω;}
\]

\[
\text{πάτερ, σῶσόν με ἐκ τῆς ὀρας ταύτης;}
\]

\[
\text{ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦτο ἤλθον εἰς τὴν ὀραν ταύτην.}
\]

\[
28 \text{πάτερ, δοξάσον σου τὸ δόνομα.}
\]

\[
\text{ἡλθεν οὖν φωνὴ ἐκ τοῦ ὀφρανοῦ:}
\]

\[
\text{καὶ εἰδοξάσα καὶ πάλιν δοξάσω.}
\]

Jesus' prayer in John 12 is rightly considered as the turning point of the Fourth Gospel, moving the story from Jesus' public ministry to his final days in Jerusalem. The movement began with the raising of Lazarus—an ironic sign that points to life in Jesus (11:25–26) and yet seals his death at the hands of the authorities (11:53)—and is completed with his anointing for burial (12:1–11) and his entry to the city as a Davidic king (12:12–19). The universal reach of Jesus' death is heralded (12:19; 11:51–52; cf. 12:32) and then symbolised in the approach of (what are probably) Greek-speaking Jews (or proselytes) to Philip with the request of an audience with Jesus (12:20–21). Philip, joined by Andrew, conveys the request to Jesus (cf. 1:43–45) who does not meet the petitioners but declares that, "the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" (v. 23, ἐλήλυθεν ἡ ὀρα ἵνα δοξάσω ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου). The "hour" in the Gospel of John parallels Jesus' comments about the necessity of the Son of Man's death and resurrection in the Synoptic

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122 1 John 3:22, 23; 5:14, 15 should not be overlooked, but the Gospel of John is most likely in the background of these instructions. Asking according to the "will" of God is to ask as Jesus would ask, with his kind of confidence, obtained through keeping the commandments of faith and love. See Colin Kruse, *The Letters of John* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich./Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2000), 189–190; Thompson, "Intercession," 225–245, for details.

123 Miller, *Biblical Prayer*, 322.

John 12:23, this "hour," which was announced to readers as early as John 2:4, has
now come (cf. 7:30; 8:20; 12:27; 13:1; 17:1).

John 12:24 clarifies the thought of suffering for others by employing the image
of a seed that must die in order to bring forth much fruit (cf. 4:34–35; 10:10–14; b.
Sanh. 90b; 1 Cor 15:37).125 In the light of Jesus' announcement in verse 23, Jesus
certainly alludes to his own death in this saying; but the generality of the saying may
also apply to the disciples. The disciples' role is more explicit in verses 25–26 (cf.
Luke 9:24; 14:26; 17:33). Although considered by some commentators as an
"intermezzo,"126 verses 24–26 play a key role in introducing the disciples to the mode
deliberate connection between Jesus' declaration of the arrival of the "hour" and the
disciples' future suffering is being made; they—like Jesus—are servants who give up
their lives in order to save them (cf. 13:13, 16; 15:15, 20; 10:11, 17, 18).127 In the
light of the connection of verses 24–26 with what precedes, Jesus' prayer in verses
27–28 may now be seen as presenting an example of a servant who—because of the
arrival of the "hour" (v. 23; cf. v. 31)—"hate[s his] life in this world [in order to] keep it for eternal life."128 But may not this prayer also be intended for the disciples
as well who will suffer as Jesus suffers (vv. 24–26; cf. 13:34–35; 15:12–13, 18–25)?

The prayer itself opens with a lament (v. 27b): "Now is my soul disturbed"
(νῶν ἡ ψυχή μου τετάρακται).129 Like the Gethsemane prayer scene in the
Synoptic Gospels (cf. Mark 14:33, 34 par. Matt 26:37, 38), the Johannean soliloquy
alludes to some of the lament psalms.130 Jesus' prayer in John 12:27–28 is prayed

125 Lincoln, St John, 296–297, notes that the voluntary, self-sacrificial aspects of the
death of Johanneine Jesus echo depictions of the Maccabean martyrs along with the
idea of the "noble" death in Greco-Roman literature.
126 Ridderbos, John, 431; Köstenberger, John, 379.
127 Ridderbos, John, 433.
128 Barrett, John, 424.
129 Voorwinde, Jesus' Emotions, 191, likens the emotion to that attributed to Jesus in
Gethsemane. The passive form of the verb indicates it is worse than the emotion
Jesus felt at the tomb of his friend Lazarus (11:33). Cf. H. Balz, "ταράσσω," EDNT
3: 336.
130 Especially, Pss 6:4a LXX (καὶ ἡ ψυχή μου ἐταράχθη σφόδρα); 41:7 LXX (πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν ἡ ψυχή μου ἐταράχθη); cf. Gen 41:8; Job 37:1; Pss 29:8; 30:10; 37:11;
from real emotion (νόσημος μου τετάρακται; cf. 11:33; 13:21; 14:1, 27), as was his prayer before the tomb of Lazarus (11:33, 35, 38).\textsuperscript{131} Like the Gethsemane account (Mark 14:33–34 par. Matt 26:37–38; [Luke 22:44]), the intensity of Jesus' emotion in verse 27 is a response to the arrival of the "hour" (cf. Mark 14:35 only). The following context informs readers that this hour announces not only Jesus' impending death—that is, the handing over of his life as one who hates it in order that life may be given to others (12:24–26, 32; cf. 11:53, 54, 57; 12:9–11)—but also the judgement of Satan and the world (12:31; 14:30; 16:11; cf. 8:44; 13:2, 27; note the use of "now" [νῦν] in both 12:27 and 31b).

It was argued in Chapter IV above that the Markan "hour" signified the arrival of the Great Tribulation upon Jesus, which Jesus requests the Father pass him by (παρέλθῃ, Mark 14:35).\textsuperscript{132} The Johannine hour is no less an hour of horror from which Jesus is tempted to shrink.\textsuperscript{133} However, unlike the Psalmist—and the Markan Jesus who follows this pattern—Jesus in John 12:27–28 refuses to ask for help. Instead, he continues his soliloquy: καὶ τί εἴπω; πάτερ, σώσον με ἐκ τῆς ὀρασίας ταῦτης; ἀλλὰ διὰ τοῦτο ἠλθέν εἰς τὴν ὀρασίαν ταῦτην. While other punctuation is possible, this sentence is best left as a rhetorical question with its response: "And what should I say—'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour" (NRSV).\textsuperscript{134} Jesus considers praying for personal release,

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\textsuperscript{131} The passive of παράσχειν means "to be troubles, frightened, terrified" (BDAG, 990, παράσχω); cf. Balz, "Ισχύω," 336. The perfect tense signifies the personal involvement of the subject of the sentence, made plain by the "now." See Voorwinde, \textit{Jesus' Emotions}, 187–195, for extended discussion on the emotional freight of the context.

\textsuperscript{132} See ch. IV.2.c above.

\textsuperscript{133} Brown, \textit{John}, 1:475: "No less than in the Synoptic Gospels, the Johannine Jesus is fearful in the face of the awful struggle with Satan (vs. 31) that the hour of his passion and death entails." Jewish apocalyptic traditions provide the most likely source of the language and theology of the Johannine cosmic trial; see Judith L. Kovacs, "'Now Shall the Ruler of this World Be Driven Out': Jesus' Death as Cosmic Battle in John 12:20–36." \textit{JBL} 114 (1995): 235–244.

but—in the light of his mission ("it is for this reason that I have come" [NRSV]; διὰ τοῦτο ἤλθον; cf. 4:34; 6:38; 8:14, 42; 9:49; 10:10; 12:46, 47)—he rejects such a prayer. In its place, the Son prays the only prayer that can arise from one who has "come" to do the will of the Father: πάτερ, δοξασάν σοι τὸ δόμα (cf. 7:17–18; 8:50, 54; 13:31, 32; 14:13; 15:8; 17:1, 4, 5, 24; Matt 6:9 par. Luke 11:2).

To the Son’s obedient petition, the Father—as readers would expect (according to 11:42a)—replies from heaven: καὶ ἐδόξασα καὶ πάλιν δοξάσω.135 From the beginning (1:1; 17:5, 24), Father and Son have worked in unison towards this "hour," and now it has come (2:4; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27 [twice]; 13:1; 17:1; cf. 4:21, 23; 5:25, 28; 16:2; 4, 25, 32). The Father has already glorified his own name (in Jesus’ works and words) and will glorify it again in his crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation.136

Although the ultimate object of glorification is the Father’s name, this name is inextricably tied to the salvation-historical purposes pursued by the Father, supremely in and through his Son.137

According to the following context, it is by means of the exaltation of the Son of Man upon the cross (12:23, 32, 34; cf. 3:14–15; 8:28) that "this world" will be judged, the "ruler of this world" will be cast out (v. 31; cf. 16:33),138 and "all people" will be drawn to the Son of Man (v. 32; cf. 6:44; 10:16).139 That is, the prayer is a request that the salvation purposes of the Father be enacted through the Son.

hour," as does Beasley-Murray, John, 212. Ridderbos, John, 434–435, says that the question καὶ τί ἐπιθύμω is introductory and not intended to indicate equivocation. BDF §448(4) notes that a question followed by ἀλλά should be answered with a firm No (cf. John 7:49; 1 Cor 10:20; Matt 11:7–9 par. Luke 7:24–26).

135 Wengst, Johannes-Evangelium, 2:66. Schnelle, Johannes, 227–228, notes that the heavenly voice signals the close of the first part of the book of John, in which Jesus is presented as the bearer of the Spirit (cf. 1:32–34).

136 Ridderbos, John, 437–437. Brown, John, 2:476–477, follows W. Thüsing, Die Erhörung und Verherrlichung Jesu im Johannesevangelium (NTAbh 21; Münster: Aschendorff, 1960), 193–198, in arguing that ἐδόξασα refers to the completed work of Jesus—i.e., including the "hour" (cf. 19:30)—and δοξάσω to the post-ascension ministry of "drawing all men to myself" (12:30). However, Brown (once again) reads the aorist tense as if it is past-referring rather than specific to a situation. See earlier discussion on this point of grammar in ch. II.C.2 above.

137 Köstenberger, John, 381.

138 Cf. John 9:34, 35. Perhaps a sideways comment on ἁποσυνάγωγος in 9:22 and 16:2 is also being made.

139 Nicholson, Death as Departure, 75–144, provides detailed exegesis of the "lifting up sayings." He argues (131–132) that v. 31b looks forward to v. 32, and that the
Jesus' response to the "hour" is stark by comparison with the Synoptic Jesus in Gethsemane. How can a human being face death with such equanimity? Is this a 'real' prayer? The answer to these questions emerges from the finer details of Johannine Christology, which John 12:27–28 so clearly reflects. The main trait of Jesus' sonship in John is that the Father's salvific will is carried out through him (4:34; 5:30; 6:38, 39), that is, through his "works" (5:36; 10:25, 37; 19:30). The Son does not obey the Father out of compulsion but, as Marianne Meye Thompson states, the Son's will is "fully in harmony with that of the Father." Jesus obeys the Father freely:

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father. (John 10:18; NRSV)

The power to dispense with his own life and to take it back again lies with the Son under the commission of the Father (10:17; 13:1, 3). His self-giving is the climax of the "hour" (of the Son of Man, 13:31–32; 12:32, 34; 3:14–15; 6:53, 62; 8:28) and derives from the unity of purposeful love of the Father and the Son whereby the Son carries out the work or command given him by the Father and the Father loves the Son for so doing (e.g., 3:35; 4:34; 5:20; 6:37–40; 10:17; 15:9–10; 17:4; 19:30). Over and over again in John, Jesus says that he depends upon the Father who shows him all that he is doing. He does nothing without the Father's knowledge and blessing but rather honours the Father in all he does (5:19, 20; 8:28, 29, 49; 10:15, 30). There is an intimacy of communication and trust between the Father and the Son that climaxes in the exaltation of the Son of Man (8:28). The prayers of Jesus—especially John 17—provide a window into this intimate relationship. Jesus' refusal to call upon the Father for help at the beginning of the "hour," therefore, is completely consistent with the Christology of the Gospel of John. It is not that Jesus is without humanity or sensation (as seen above), but that the divine purpose—with which he is in complete agreement—is about to be fulfilled through him. The possibility remains for him to pray a "Gethsemane prayer" since he is free to lay

judgement of 12:31a is taking place throughout Jesus' ministry and here in the response of the audience to the voice from heaven (vv. 27–30); they are self-condemned by their unbelief (3:16–21; 5:24; 9:35–41; 12:44–50). The νον of verse 31 (cf. v. 27) points, however, to the finality of judgement in the exaltation of the Son of Man through the cross and resurrection. Thompson, The God of the Gospel of John, 95, and, Meyer, "'The Father'," 260–261, should be consulted for the remainder of this paragraph.
down his life and free to take it up again; his refusal to do so revolves around the
prior union of his will with the Father's, which he continues to choose at this
moment, even though inwardly disturbed.

But is the prayer, then, one that Jesus alone may pray? The answer from the
context of the prayer examined above is No, but other evidence may also be
marshalled. Firstly, the freedom with which Jesus prays to the Father in 12:28a is
one into which he invites others (8:36), including the disciples. Consider, secondly,
how the prayer itself—that the Father "glorify" his name in the Son (cf. 17:1, 4, 5)—
echoes the motivation Jesus gives the disciples in the prayer promises (14:13; 15:8).
Thirdly, while the verses following the prayer imply that the glorification of the
name of the Father in the exaltation of the Son of Man entails the judging of the
world and the casting out of its ruler (12:31) in his "hour," Jesus will declare in the
Farewell Discourse that Satan and the world will continue to tempt and even destroy
the disciples after his departure because they belong to him (15:18–25; 16:1–4, 8–
11). Indeed, Jesus specifically prays for their protection from both the devil and the
world in John 17:9–19. Therefore, Jesus' prayer for the glorification of the Father in
12:27–28—like the Gethsemane prayer in the Synoptic Gospels—including the
disciples and is part of the freedom they are to enjoy as "children of God" (1:12–13).
The completion of the mission of the Father and the Son embraces the disciples in
such a prayer as this.

But if the prayer is a real prayer, does it not contradict or abrogate the prayer
promises examined above? Patrick Miller, for example, finds this prayer to be a
motivation clause used frequently in the Psalter to move God into action (e.g., Pss
25:11; 31:3; 79:9; 109:21; 143:11; Jer 14:7, 21). The Psalmist asks to be removed
from trials or suffering for the sake of God's reputation. Jesus, in a strange twist,
refuses to ask for divine help and makes the motivation clause of the Psalmist his
own prayer. How can Jesus instruct the disciples to ask for "whatever you want" but
refuse to do so himself and, furthermore, place such a large obstacle to petition in the
way? The answer to this question is twofold. It must, firstly, embrace the nature of
Johannine Christology: doing God's will (i.e., accepting the "hour") is not only what
Jesus must do, but also what he wants to do; it is his "food" (4:34; 6:27; cf. Deut 8:3;

141 Miller, Biblical Prayer, 120–122; cf. Lincoln, St John, 351.
Secondly, as John 14:13 and 15:8 have already shown, the glorification of God is not only a prayer in itself—that God's salvation plan be forwarded in and through the death of Christ—but also the motivation for petitions to be requested in Jesus' name. "Glorify your name" is therefore both a limitation upon petition and a motivation for petitions to be asked in the first place. The disciples will indeed have their own "hour" (16:4a, 25), but they will also have "joy," both in Jesus' resurrected presence and in his exalted absence (16:22)—including the privilege of answered prayer (16:23–27; 14:12–14; 15:7–8, 16). The tension between joy and tribulation will be endured through the presence of the Spirit who will both bring the message of Jesus to them and thereby glorify the Son and the Father (16:14–15; cf. 14:25–26) and be their advocate when they receive the hatred of the world (15:26; 16:7–11). He will be part of the answer to Jesus' prayer in John 17, that the disciples be protected (vv. 11, 15). The disciples' future is mixed, but Jesus' is not. Jesus' future is sequentially staged. First comes the "hour" and then comes the joy of returning to the Father. Jesus' says that his soul is distressed at the arrival of the hour, but also that he will still face it without flinching, knowing that God will be glorified through it.

Jesus' prayer in John 17:1–26 expands upon that found in 12:27–28 and gives further support for the "already–not yet" tension embedded in the Johannine prayer sayings. The main prayer Jesus offers in John 17 is, once again, for the glorification of the Father, this time through the glorification of the Son (vv. 1, 4, 5). But Jesus' all-embracing prayer for God's glory in John 17 is not only about the completion of his work (v. 4; cf. 4:34; 19:30). He also asks that the disciples be protected from the devil and the world (vv. 11, 15, 17–19) and that they perfected in unity (vv. 11, 21). Even though Jesus announces the defeat of the evil one by means of his death and resurrection (12:31; 16:33), the disciples—as they progress the mission of the Father and the Son in the joy of the divine presence (14:23, by means of the Spirit, 14:16–17)—will continually face this foe and bear the hatred of the world for the sake of Jesus (15:21). This confrontation—as Jesus shows in John 17—will be endured through prayer. Jesus' prayer for God to be glorified (12:28; 17:1, 4, 5) entails his prayer for the disciples and hence the disciples' prayer for God.

to be glorified through them in the completion of the mission of the Father and the Son.

In essence, while it is possible to consider John 12:27–28 only as a limitation to petitionary prayer, within its immediate and wider context of Jesus' prayer teaching and prayer examples, it must also be seen as a motivation and guide for petitionary prayer in the fulfilment of Jesus' mission by his followers as well. Jesus' ministry comes to a climax at the "hour," which refers primarily to his death upon the cross, followed by his resurrection and the beginning of a new era of petitionary prayer, in which the disciples now live. They too will face their hour, but they will endure this by means of the promises issued by Jesus, including the promise of his Spirit and the promise of answered prayer. With these two "weapons" the enemy will continue to be overcome and the will of God will continue to be done.

E. Conclusions from the Gospel of John

The distinctive contribution of the Johannine prayer material to the thesis question of the relationship between promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer is found in the prayer promises and their foundation. A number of features may be highlighted. To begin with, the prayer promises (John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26) appear to be intentionally placed in the era of Jesus' resurrection and ascension and obtain their confidence and power from the exaltation of Jesus to the Father (14:12; 16:23–24). Secondly, the prayer promises are made with the expectation that the disciples' prayers will continue the mission of Jesus (and hence of the Father) on earth so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. The disciples participate in Jesus' ascended glory as they pray in his name (14:13; 15:8; cf. 17:24; 12:27–28). The reason for this is that the "name" of the Son stands for his union with the Father and the accomplishment of the purpose of the Father and the Son in the world. To confess this name (i.e., "Jesus Christ" [17:3])—or to use it in prayer—brings glory to the Father and the Son and links the petitioner into their union and purpose (14:12–14; 17:1–26). The glory of the Father (and the Son)—as understood missionally rather than generically—is the primary condition of successful petition and its sole motivation and aim. A third feature of the Johannine prayer promises is their frequency and repetition of key vocabulary and syntax. The promises spell out a pattern that is to be followed with the expectation of success.
The conditions of prayer found within the promises (other than the glory of God) reinforce the foundation of the promises and do not come across as "conditions" in the usual sense. The first and most important condition is to believe that Jesus is the revelation of the Father and one with him (14:12–14, 1–11). A second condition is that one abide in the Son, which means to rely upon the Son for salvation and "life" and to follow his commands as the Son followed the commands of the Father (15:3–7). These "commands" may be boiled down to one: to give up one's life so that others may live (15:12–17; 13:34, 35), just as Jesus did (10:11–18, esp. v. 18). Once this condition is seen in the light of the initiating love of the Father and the Son (e.g., Jesus' choosing disciples as his own, 15:14–16) and not as a merit that precedes privilege, it loses any sense of burden or fear of fulfilment.

However, the prayer promises of John's Gospel are not offered only in an era of fulfilled eschatology (the "already"). The "not yet" is brought to bear through the mention of opposition from the world and its ruler (15:18–16:4a; 17:13–18), which, even though overcome (16:33), remain a threat. Judas' betrayal is intended in part to supply an example of Satan's ongoing influence (13:2, 27). The "prince of the world" continues to "come" into the world after Jesus' crucifixion (14:30; cf. 1 John 4:1). Although Satan has no power over the disciples—as he had none over Jesus—he is still able to inflict harm. This threat echoes that of the Great Tribulation in the Synoptic Gospels and is heard loudly in the context of Jesus' prayer in John 12:27–28 (cf. vv. 31–33) as well as the great prayer of John 17 (vv. 9–16).

The only clear restriction upon petitionary prayer that can be isolated in John's Gospel is Jesus' prayer on the verge of his crucifixion (12:27–28). In this prayer, Jesus, though disturbed in his soul, appears fully confident in the Father and in his own desire that the Father fulfil his plan through the "hour" of crucifixion ("Glorify your name," 12:28a). This prayer conforms to the pattern of Jesus' submission found throughout John, but should it be seen as a restriction upon petitionary prayer by his followers? While this prayer can be seen as a restriction upon petition, a distinction needs to be drawn between Jesus and the disciples at this point. For Jesus in John's Gospel, the "hour" works sequentially, first the crucifixion and then the resurrection. For the disciples, however, the period after Jesus' ascension is mixed; it is an "already–not yet" era in which they will experience joy and sorrow, success and persecution. Jesus' prayer in John 12:27–28 forms part of the gospel story in John and, unlike the Gethsemane prayer, is not intended as an example for the disciples.
While such a prayer can be prayed by the disciples, it will be more of a motivation for or ultimate condition upon prayer, like the first petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Because of its emphasis on the "already" in the exaltation of Jesus to the Father, the prayer material of the Gospel of John contains little to explain how petitionary prayer affects (or effects) the purposes of God. One may surmise from the frequent mention of the Spirit as another "advocate" in the period of Jesus' absence that it is the Spirit who will bring the promises and words of Jesus into reality and provide the needed protection that Jesus requests in his great prayer of John 17. The detailing of the connection (by the Spirit) between petitionary prayer and the fulfilment of God's purposes must await the integrative nuances of the apostle Paul.

When compared to the Synoptic Gospels, the tension between promise and restriction in the Johannine prayer teaching leans much more heavily to the promise side. The "already–not yet" eschatological tension, though present in John, is significantly muted by comparison and replaced by the mediation of Jesus. Jesus' finished work, including his exaltation, has brought about an era of tremendous confidence in prayer. Jesus is seen as the guarantor of prayer, the means of prayer, and the protector of those who pray. The purpose of prayer is not so much to bring about God's kingdom but to magnify his glory in his Son. While John's Gospel does not specifically tie petitionary prayer to the work of the Spirit, one is led to this view, given the intimacy with which the Spirit is involved in the lives of the disciples in the completion of the mission of the Father and the Son in the world.
VII. THE LETTER OF JAMES

Part Two of this thesis examines two New Testament witnesses to the tension between boldness and limitation in petitionary prayer within texts that employ the language and/or syntax of the prayer promises of the Synoptic Gospels. The previous chapter focussed on the Gospel of John in which it was concluded that the disciples' prayers in Jesus' name would continue the ministry of Jesus (for the glorification of God) after his departure within a period of joy and opposition. Whilst prayers for daily needs may be included in the promises (especially in view of the repeated "ask whatever [you wish]"), these matters are not as prominent as they were in the Synoptic prayer promises. Limitations upon petitionary prayer in John's Gospel concerned his own prayer at the arrival of the "hour" (12:27–28). Here it was noted that the "hour" for Jesus is sequential, first his crucifixion then his resurrection and ascension, whereas for the disciples it is mixed. Finally, it is likely that for John the presence of the Spirit provides the nexus between tribulation and joy in the present era for those who pray in Jesus' name.

The present chapter is an examination of the prayer material in the Letter of James. The choice of James as a witness to the tension within petitionary prayer is not random. Firstly, it provides a representative of the Catholic Epistles for this study. Secondly, James contains a good amount of the right kind of material (i.e., prayer promises) and is relatively independent from other parts of the New Testament. Thirdly, while studies on the prayer material of James are now more common, the book remains relatively unnoticed in New Testament prayer research.


in general. It is hoped that, in part, this chapter will contribute to the rehabilitation of James as a contributor to New Testament prayer theology and practice, particularly with respect to the tension between petition and limitation upon petition, which is reflected in the majority of prayer texts in James.³

Prayer instruction plays a significant role in the Letter of James, including its opening and closing sections (James 1:5–8; 3:9–10; 4:2–3; 5:4, 13–18).⁴

It is certainly not by accident that James' composition begins and ends on the topic of prayer, since prayer is the activity that most fundamentally defines and expresses that construal of reality called 'faith.'⁵

Perhaps more importantly, prayer material is integrated into every level of the world of the readers: the life of the individual believer (1:5–6; 5:13–14), the Christian community to which the believer belongs (4:2, 3; 5:15–16), and the external world—both in its earthly and its heavenly dimensions (1:5–8; 5:17–18).⁶ For James,

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³ References to the author and the Letter of James as "James" in this chapter make no assumptions about the original writer or the origin of the letter. The authorship and origin of this letter have attracted significant attention without agreement among scholars. For an early date and James the brother of Jesus as author, see: Hartin, James, 16–25; Luke Timothy Johnson, The Letter of James: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary (AB 37A; New York: Doubleday, 1995), 89–123; for arguments that James is a second century pseudonymous letter, see: Nienhuis, Not by Paul Alone, 99–161.

⁴ As noted in the article that led to the return of James to mainstream scholarship, Fred O. Francis, "The Form and Function of the Opening and Closing Paragraphs of James and 1 John," ZNW 61 (1970): 124–126.

⁵ Johnson, James, 184.

⁶ See John H. Elliott, "The Epistle of James in Rhetorical and Social Scientific Perspective: Holiness–Wholeness and Patterns of Replication," BTB 23 (1993): 71–81, for details on the three levels of holiness–wholeness in James reflected in this sentence.
therefore, prayer is not a separate compartment of life but incorporated into the whole of it.\(^7\)

The prayer sections of James appear to be syntactically and theologically related, indicating that a "theology" of petitionary prayer in James is possible.\(^8\) Indeed, it will be argued here that the prayer material of James accumulates throughout the letter to a climax at the letter's conclusion (5:13–18). Related to this point is the fact that James appears to echo the prayer language and theology of both the Synoptic Gospels and the Johannine corpus.\(^9\)

Each of the above factors makes the study of the prayer promises and limitations in James a pertinent and potentially fruitful pursuit for this investigation. After treating the question of the letter's genre and coherence, focussed exegeses of the relevant prayer texts (Jas 1:5–8; 4:2–3; 5:13–18) will be offered before drawing implications for this thesis as a whole.

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\(^7\) Patrick J. Hartin, *A Spirituality of Perfection: Faith in Action in the Letter of James* (Collegeville: Michael Glazier/Liturgical, 1999), 124: "Prayer is another social marker identifying the members of James' community and separating them from the wider society [...] Prayer empowers both the individual as well as the community to maintain integrity and identity."

\(^8\) αἰτεῖν—1:5, 6; 4:3; λαμβάνειν—1:7, (12); 4:2, 3; (5:7); διδόναι—1:5 [x2]; (2:16; 4:6 [x2]) 5:18. Wypaldo, "Gebetsparänese," 78, comments, "So ist zu konstatieren, dass das Gebet mit einer Erwähnung bzw Anspielung in bis zu 17 Versen relativ häufig als eigenständiges theologisches Thema des Jak vorkommt und entsprechend zu würdigen ist." See also David G. Peterson, "Prayer in the General Epistles," in *Teach Us to Pray: Prayer in the Bible and the World* (ed. Donald A. Carson; Exeter/Grand Rapids, Mich.: Paternoster/Baker, 1990), 107: "Within the structure of the argument [of James], prayer is discussed at three significant points [...], suggesting that prayer is a key to the life of godliness and true worship that the writer seeks to promote in his readers."

\(^9\) See Murphy-O'Connor, "The Prayer of Petition," 398–411, for a recent rehearsal. The use of αἰτεῖν (3 s. impv.) and δοθήσεται in the opening sections of the letter (compare Matt 7:7, 11 par. Luke 11:9, 13; cf. John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26) may indicate material shared with Q, though James seems to be focussing on "wisdom" as the prized acquisition (so, Karris, *Prayer and the NT*, 172). Bauckham, *James*, 86, concludes that James 1:5–6, "[...] succeeded in expressing very concisely the major elements of Jesus' teaching about prayer." Here it is important to qualify what is being observed. It is the Jesus *traditions* that are echoed in James rather than an extant canonical gospel; see Wesley Hiram Wachob, *The Voice of Jesus in the Social Rhetoric of James* (SNTSMS 106; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), passim; Schlosser, ed., *Catholic Epistles*, 75–212.
A. The Genre, Structure, and Coherence of the Letter of James

This chapter considers the book of James to be a unified, coherent, and intentional letter and that the prayer material contained within it is both purposeful and connected. This proposition is more acceptable in present Jamesian research than in that of a previous generation. The formal genre of James is that of a letter, perhaps a "general letter." Dibelius was correct to note the predominance of paraenesis and the staccato nature of parts of James as a result, but ongoing study of the book has not upheld his overall negative assessment of the book's unity as a composition. James employs several kinds of literature and styles of exhortation, including Jewish wisdom sayings, Hellenistic moral exhortation, and Jesus material,

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each with their own antecedents. This variety does not indicate patchwork composition but diverse heritage.

There is no substantial difference of scholarly opinion regarding the structure of James. Most scholars see James consisting of: (1) a preface (1:1); (2) an introduction to the themes and the underlying conceptual framework of the letter (1:2–18/27); (3) a body (2:1–5:6/11); and, (4) a conclusion (5:7/12–20, or 5:12/13–20)—perhaps a recapitulation of themes found in the introductory chapter and expanded upon in the central section (2:1–5:6). Studies by Cheung and Taylor have shown how repeated themes and chiasms bind the letter together into a whole, though some of their suggestions verge on being over-subtle. For the purposes of this chapter, it should be noted that the prayer material under investigation occurs in all three parts of the letter (opening, body [near the middle], and closing).

The theological coherence of the book can be approached in several ways. Bauckham persuasively argues that "wholeness" is the binding theme of the book. The first verse of the book situates "wholeness" in Jewish eschatology. The address, "the twelve tribes in the Diaspora" (ταῖς δώδεκα φυλαίς ταῖς ἐν τῇ διασπορᾷ), is probably not intended as a literal description—though see Acts 16:7; 1 Clem 55:6—but as a title of hope, implying the eschatological reunion of all the tribes of Israel (cf. Acts 7:8; Exod 24:4; Ezek 47:13; Ass. Mos. 4:8; 2 Bar 1:2; Matt 19:27 par. Luke 22:29–30). The addressess are the new Israel (cf. Gal 6:16; 1 Pet 2:9) who (perhaps) live in the regions to which the Jews were exiled in the deportations of 721

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15 See Bauckham, *James*, 30–111, for details. Bauckham (63–69) holds that after ch. 1, James is a series of related but discrete sections.
20 So also Hartin, *Spirituality*, 51, and many others.
and 586 B.C. The readers are most likely Christians of Jewish origin, now considered as the "firstfruits" of the full harvest yet to come (1:18).

The eschatological goal of completeness or wholeness (1:4) must be actively pursued; the "crown of life" awaits those who obtain wholeness (1:12). In the meantime readers are continually confronted with a choice between God and the "world" (4:4; cf. 1:27; 2:5; 3:6). God, known as the "father of lights" is primarily conceived as "the giver of every good gift and every perfect endowment from above" (1:17). The world, by contrast, is energised from below, ultimately from "hell" (3:6).

In between these extremes live human beings who, though made in God's image (3:9) and intended to "tame" creation (3:7–8), have been captured by their own desires and, as a result, are powerless to escape the snare of temptation and death (which is the final destination, cf. 1:13–15; 3:1–12). Christians, though released by God from this cycle of death by the "word of truth" (1:18), must "receive" that salvific word, and continue to put aside the abundance of evil that remains (1:19–21). The active realisation of their passive identity—performed in the midst of various eschatological trials—is a joyful experience in which one knows that steadfast resistance effects wholeness or perfection (1:2–4, 12; 5:11). In fact, the goal of perfection or completeness reflects the character of God himself (1:17, 25), whose thoughts, speech, and actions are consistent with each other. God is frequently portrayed in James as a just judge of all people (1:13–15, 17, 20, 22–25, 21 Davids, James, 63–64, and Hartin, Spirituality, 51–52. Contra Dibelius, James, 65–67, and Sophie Laws, The Epistle of James (BNTC; London/New York: A. & C. Black/Harper & Row, 1980), 47–49.

22 Derived from, Hartin, James, 49–55. See also Cheung, Genre, 240–248.


24 The same cosmic contrast is seen in 4:7, ὑποτάγητε οὖν τῷ θεῷ, ἀντίστητε δὲ τῷ διαβόλῳ.

The rhetorical techniques of James' paraenesis reflect the urgency of the eschatological trial. James—like other New Testament (e.g., 1 John) and contemporary Jewish texts (e.g., Sirach)—sets up sharp alternatives, avoiding generalizations or inconclusiveness, forcing readers to think and act correctly. From the opening paragraphs firm distinctions are made between God and the world, faith and doubt, testing and temptation, rich and poor, reward and punishment, and, true and false religion. By employing clipped imperatives and loaded illustrations readers are directed away from behaviour and thinking that originates from "below" (3:6, 15, ultimately from the devil, 4:7, though responsibility remains with the participants, 1:13–15) and towards that which comes from above (ἀνωθεν, 3:15, 17), from God, the generous giver of every good and perfect gift (1:17).

The primary sins in James, therefore, are duplicity (or, double-mindedness, δίψυχος; 1:8; 4:8) and unstableness (or, vacillation, ἀκατάστατος, ἀκαταστασία; 1:8; 3:8, 16). These qualities contradict the peace and purity that lie at the heart of God's own completeness (cf. 3:13–18). Readers who believe that friendship with God and the world can be maintained simultaneously are "adulteresses" (4:4). The

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26 Hartin, Spirituality, 52–53, argues that perfection is attainable within the present age, but Robert W. Wall, The Community of the Wise: The Letter of James (Valley Forge, Pa.: Trinity, 1997), 49–50, correctly sees perfection in James as a gift received at the Parousia. Regeneration includes salvation and sanctification or moral change, effected by the same word of truth (comp. 1:19–21 and 3:14).


28 Termed "Korrecturschreiben" by Wiard Popkes, Adressaten, Situation und Form des Jakobusbriefes (SBB 125/126; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1986), 209, as cited in Elliott, "James in Rhetorical Perspective," 72. The large proportion of "thinking" words in Jas 1 is noted by Johnson, James, 175–176. T. B. Cargal, Restoring the Diaspora: Discursive Structure and Purpose in the Epistle of James (SBLDS 144; Atlanta: Scholars, 1993), 57–105, should be consulted for the remainder of this paragraph.

29 John J. Schmitt, "You Adultresses! The Image in James 4:4," NovT 28 (1986): 327–337, argues that the term "adulteresses" (a feminine plural in Greek) does not allude to the "marriage" of Israel and Yahweh (the most common interpretation) but to the immoral woman of LXX Prov 30:20, whose pattern is to feel no guilt over sin (ὁδὸς γυναικὸς μοιχαλίδος). However, the Hebrew Bible parallels of this term are sufficient to warrant a broad concept of unfaithfulness in the present context. In
results of these sins lay at the heart of the individuals and groups to which the letter is addressed (e.g., 2:1–12; 4:1–10; 5:14–16).

"Trials" (1:2, 12) make up the bulk of James' exhortations and face the readers on the physical (1:9–11; 5:1–6, 13–16), spiritual (1:13–15, 16; 5:7–11; 17–18, 19–20), individual (1:2–8, 19–21, 22–25; 5:7–11, 12, 13–14a), and corporate (1:26–27; 2:1–13; 3:1–4:10; 5:14b–16) fronts. James' relentless polarizing of behaviour and thought is intended to (con)form the social group, so that they might reflect their identity: "the twelve tribes of the dispersion" (1:1).30 A key part of this formation process is prayer. James does not put before readers a God who only commands. Rather, he argues that the mercy and grace of God (2:13; 3:17; 4:6; 5:11) are intended to lead to repentance and to the strength necessary to resist the enemy (4:6–10; cf. 1:9–11).

Ultimately, perfection—and wisdom from above, the means to perfection (1:2–8; 3:13–18)—is relational. How people are treated, spoken to, and listened to, and how God is treated, spoken to, and listened to, point to an integrated vertical–horizontal orthopraxis in James. The readers of James are pictured as those who are to love God and their neighbour (1:12; 2:5, 8–9), knowing that the trials and temptations that arise can and must be endured or resisted, corporately. While the judgement of God is put before them as an eschatological motive to change (2:12; 4:11–12; 5:9–11), the "coming" of the Lord is the "great reversal" for which they wait expectantly, looking for God's final justice and the crown of life (5:7–8; cf. 1:12; 2:5), not as mere individuals, but as a community (note the plurals in the previous references). Prayer that does not account for the corporate integration of wholeness is judged as ineffective by James, as the following exegeses will show.31

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30 Hartin, Spirituality, 49–51.
31 The above paragraph was stimulated by the analyses of James by: Bauckham, James, 93–111; Cheung, Genre, 249–270; Elliott, "James in Rhetorical Perspective," 71–81; Hartin, Spirituality, 1–128; Johnson, "James 3:13–4:10," 327–347; Johnson, "Friendship," 166–183; and Wypaldo, "Gebetsparänese," 78–80. Cheung uses the phrase "great reversal." The connection between the Jesus traditions and James, now recognised as a crucial research area, has not been expanded upon in this section due to the limitations of space and focus. See Bauckham, James, 74–111, for recent conclusions on the relationship of James and the Jesus traditions, who shows well the connection of Jesus and James with the Jewish wisdom tradition in general.
B. Exegesis of James 1:5–8; 4:2–3; 5:13–18

1. James 1:5–8

5 Εἰ δὲ τις ὁμοίως λείπει τοις, [A1]
        αἰτεῖται παρὰ τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ πάσιν ἀπλῶς καὶ μὴ
        ἀνειδίζοντος [B1]
        καὶ δοθῆσαι αὐτῷ. [C1]
6 αἰτεῖται δὲ ἐν πίστει μηδὲν διακρίνομενος· [B2α]
        ὁ γὰρ διακρίνομενος ἐοικεν κλύδωνι θαλάσσης ἀνεμιζομένω καὶ
        ἔπιπξομένω. [B2β]
7 μὴ γὰρ οἰέσθω ὁ ἀνθρωπός ἐκείνος
        ὅτι λήψεται τι παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου, [C2]
8 ἀνὴρ δίψυχος,
        ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτοῦ. [B3]

James 1:5–8 functions as a qualifying statement (δέ) to the opening paragraph of the book, which treats the attainment of perfection or wholeness (vv. 2–4). Verse 5 follows the prayer-promise pattern found in the Synoptic Gospels, beginning with a connecting statement [A1] and followed by a two-part promise that, if one asks God [B1], then one will receive what one asks for [C1]. Verses 6–8 qualify the command/apodosis of verse 5 by indicating how one should ask—that is, the inner disposition one ought to have. This is expressed negatively, portraying the circumstances in which prayer for wisdom will not be answered. This expression reverses the Synoptic and Johannine prayer promises, which encourage open-ended prayer promises ("whatever you ask," Mark 11:24 par. Matt 21:22; "ask anything [you wish]," John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26). At the close of the paragraph, James' negative qualification is stressed very strongly, using terms that mark the appearance of doubt (viz. δίψυχος, 4:8; ἀκατάστασία, 3:16; cf. 3:13–4:10).

The relationship of verses 2–4 and 5–8 is a little cloudy (is δέ in v. 5 connective or adversative?), but the use of the verb λείπειν in both verses 4 and 5

32 Scholars have noted close parallels between Jas 1:5–6 and Matt 7:7–11 (par. Luke 11:9–13) and John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26 (note αἰτεῖν, λαμβάνειν, διδόναι). Stanley E. Porter, "Is dipsuchos (James 1,8; 4,8) a 'Christian' Word?," Biblica 71 (1990): 480–481, suggests that James, "while not directly quoting Matthew […] is paraphrasing and using the dominical words for his own purposes" (481). Bauckham, James, 86, sees James not merely alluding to the Jesus prayer traditions but creatively re-expressing them.

33 See BDAG, 213, δέ; BDF §447 for uses of δέ.
is intentional and is not only "an external connective device." Another binding theme of the paragraphs (i.e., vv. 2–4 and 5–8) is the exhortation to correct "thinking." The goal of such thinking is the climax of verses 2–4: ἵνα ὑπετέλεσθε τελειοὶ καὶ ὀλίκηροι ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι ("in order that you might be mature and complete, lacking in nothing"). In anticipation of this condition one experiences "pure joy" (πᾶσαν χαράν), which, although it is an eschatological quality within the New Testament and beyond (e.g., John 16:20, 22; Rom 5:2–5, 11; Phil 1:4, 18, 19; 3:1; 4:4, 10; 1 Peter 1:6, 8), is experienced in the here and now. By contrast, the results and condition of "doubt" (i.e., of wrong thinking) are portrayed as miserable (vv. 6–8).

The various tests or trials (cf. πειρασμοῖς [...] ποικίλοις, v. 2) that form the context of the opening (and guiding) exhortation of the letter should not be restricted to the rich–poor discussion (1:9–11; 4:13–17; 5:1–6), or to "persecutions which befall the entire group of "brethren." Rather, these trials refer to any conflict or distress, either within or outside the individual or community that threaten one's ultimate destiny within the restoration of Israel under Christ's lordship (1:1; 2:1).
The eschatological (apocalyptic?) atmosphere of "testing"—already common in Jewish paraenesis (Jub. 17:18; 19:8; Test. Jos. 2:7; cf. Gen 22:1–19; Jas 2:21)—directs readers both forwards to a time of future perfection and completeness and inwards to ensure that they attain the *endurance* from which perfection grows (ὑπομονή; cf. 1:12; 5:11; 4 Macc. 1:11; 7:22; 9:30; Test. Jos. 10:1). The "already—not yet" tension is again an integral part of the prayer-promise context.

Although the opening paragraph (vv. 2–4) is full of exhortations to the readers, the divine hand is evident in every verse. Readers must know that testing of faith through trials "effects" endurance (κατεργάζεται, "bring about," or "produce"), and allows endurance to cause its "perfect work" (ἐργον τέλειον ἐχέτω). These works are performed by God to bring about their perfection and completion (ἐνα ἕτε τέλειοι καὶ ὀλόκληροι ἐν μηδενὶ λειπόμενοι, v. 4). "Perfection" is not an austere quality but has the sense of participating in God's pleasure in the completion of his work (cf. Gen 2:1–3; Jas 2:22); it is the basis of the joy by which one "reckons" trials (1:2). Yet ὑπομονή and the command ἐχέτω in verse 3 require an

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*Bible: The Drama of Divine-Human Dialogue* (OBT; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 118–139; Miller, *Biblical Prayer*, 55–134. *Ps. Sol.* 5:5 captures this background well: "When we are persecuted, we call on you for help and you will not turn away from our prayer for you are our God" (*OTP* 2:657; cf. 15:1; 1:1). Here James takes the place of the psalmist who exhorts Israel to cry out to God in their time of need; cf. Jas 5:13, 14.


41 *4 Macc.* 7:21–22: "For what philosopher is there, who lives by the whole rule of philosophy and believes in God and knows that it is blessed to endure every pain for the sake of virtue, who could fail to master his passions for the sake of piety?" (*OTP* 2:553); *Test. Jos.* 10:1–2: "So you see, my children, how great are the things that patience and prayer with fasting accomplish. You also, if you pursue self-control and purity with patience and prayer with fasting in humility of heart, the Lord will dwell among you, because he loves self-control" (*OTP* 1:821).

42 James is perhaps weak in stating this but it may be deduced not only from the presence of trials, which threaten to destroy the hope of the reader (1:13–15), but also from the mention of regeneration by the "word of truth" (1:18; cf. Col 1:15; Eph 1:13; 2 Cor 6:7; 2 Tim 2:15); cf. Davids, *James*, 88–89; Dibelius, *James*, 103–105; Hartin, *James*, 94, 105.


44 BDAG, 422, ἔχω, 8.
active human participation in the endurance of the trial (cf. Jub 17:18; 19:8; T. Jos 2:7; 10:1). Thus, right from the start of the letter, the passive/divine–active/human tension (mentioned in section A, above) is brought into prominence. It is the divine hand that is ultimately goading and effecting perfection "through various trials" (πειρασμοί [...] ποικίλοις). The readers are called to enter into and endure every test, knowing that (γινώσκοντες, v. 3) in the divine purposes of salvation, enduring trials leads to perfection and joy.

Prayer for wisdom—which is introduced in verse 5—fits well into this passive/divine–active/human context of the first section of James (cf. 4:2–3; 5:13–18), and is not a "superficial" interruption to the flow of thought in James. Rather, it is presented as the means by which the readers—through wisdom (σοφία)—may obtain the essential divine gifts of endurance and wholeness. What is this "wisdom" that the readers lack, and for what purpose should it be requested? The context suggests it is an ability to rightly understand and endure eschatological trials, which have come in order to prove their faith (τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως) and produce "endurance" (ὑπομονή) as an initial and critical fruit (v. 3; cf. Davids, James, 68. Dibelius, James, 74–77, notes a "concatenation" in James 1:2–4 in which is found terms similar to other like constructions (cf. Rom 5:3–5; 1 Pet 6, 7).

Note: 1:18, βουλήθεις ἀπεκύψαν ἡμᾶς λόγῳ ἀληθείας, and 1:21b, δέξασθε τὸν ἐμφυτὸν λόγον τὸν δυνάμενον σώσαι τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν. The comment of Davids, James, 67, on v. 2 could apply to verses 2–4 as a whole: "James is [...] instructing his readers to get the proper perspective, i.e., an eschatological perspective, on the situation in which they find themselves." James certainly lies in the trajectory of a "testing tradition" exemplified in Prov 27:21b; Sir 2:1–12 and T. Benj. 6:5–7 (see Davids, James, 35–38), in which two ways are placed before readers, but the emphasis on joy distinguishes James. The positive value of trials or proofs of faith (τὸ δοκίμιον ὑμῶν τῆς πίστεως) can be included in this distinctiveness, along with other NT writings (e.g., 1 Peter). The whole of Sir 2:1–12 forms a valuable parallel for Jas 1:2–4, 12; 1 Pet 1:6–7 and Rom 5:3–5.

Contra Dibelius, James, 77. Davids, James, 71, agrees with the sentiment of Dibelius that λείπεται σοφίας is editorial, but argues that the theme of the unit is not prayer but wisdom, which he says more clearly arises from vv. 2–4 than prayer. The issue need not be stated so baldly; how else is one to seek wisdom than by prayer? See, e.g., 1 Kgs 3:3–14; 2 Chr 1:7–13; cf. Wis 7:7, 15; 8:21—9:18; Pr. Jac. 17. Davids, James, 71; Donald E. Gowan, "Wisdom and Endurance in James," HBT 15 (1993): 145–153; Johnson, James, 182–184; J. A. Kirk, "The Meaning of Wisdom in James: Examination of a Hypothesis," NTS 16 (1969): 38.
5:11). Without wisdom, the eschatological goal of completion or perfection lies begging. Other uses of "wisdom" in James suggest that it is also a divine quality that comes from "above" and is "pure, peaceable, gentle," and so on (3:17)—God alone provides wisdom (Prov 2:6; 9:10; 1 Kgs 3:3–14; 2 Chr 1:4–10; Wis 7:7).

James' exhortation to prayer may be summarised thus: reckon it pure joy when you encounter trials; if you do not reckon trials pure joy, seek God's wisdom in order that you do, and it will be given to you.

The conditional sentence of verse 5 is probably not addressed to all readers, but is targeting—at an early stage in the epistle—a group within the audience who "fail" (λειτυτεται) in the way outlined in verses 6–8. It is not merely their "thinking" that needs reforming by wisdom, but their hearts. "Doubt" (cf. διακρινομενος, twice in v. 6) is not to be thought of here as an intellectual quality, but as the denial of the integrative–moral nature of God, "with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change" (Jas 1:17, ESV; παρ' φώ κου ένι παραλλαγή ή τροπής ἀποσκίασμα) and who gives to all who ask "without reservation or reproach" (1:5, τού διδόντος θεού πάσιν ἄπλως και μή ὑνειδίζοντος; cf. Pss 104:27–28; 145:15–16; Prov 2:6; Jas 5:7–11. μακροθυμεῖν and ὑπομονή/ὑπομένειν are synonymous in James.

Todd C. Penner, The Epistle of James and Eschatology: Re-reading an Ancient Christian Letter (JSNTSup 121; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 121–213, has correctly noted the "eschatological framework" of the Letter of James (1:2–12; 4:6–5:12): "the call to remain steadfast in the trials of the last days" (211). Penner considers "remaining steadfast," "not being double-minded," and "being perfect" as the themes which are filled out in the body of the letter (1:13–4:6). Without critiquing the details of Penner's framework, eschatology and its consequences do feature prominently in this letter.

Though it is going too far to suggest that James has a "wisdom pneumatology" (so, Davids, James, 56), the link of the Spirit with moral virtues and maturity in relationships elsewhere in the NT (e.g., Gal 5:22) shows that James is drawing from a common well of understanding about the nature of wisdom. See Kirk, "Meaning," 34–37, for primary Jewish sources.

54 Here the condition is "real," and not rhetorical.

55 BDAG, 104, ἀπλῶς, 1. See also the note on ἀπλῶς in Dibelius, James, 77–79. Both aspects of this word ("openly"/"simply" and "kindness"; cf. BDAG, 104, ἄπλοττις, 2) may be captured in the description of "without reservation."

56 BDAG, 710, ὑνειδίζω, 2 (emphasis original): "ὁν[ειδίζω] can also mean charge or reproach someone with someth[ing], a kind of verbal extortion, with the purpose of obtaining someth[ing] from a pers[on…]." Dibelius, James, 79, connects this to the manipulative ways of a benefactor seeking to emphasize the size of a gift in order to insure proper appreciation by a recipient; he cites Ps. Sol. 5:13–15 and Philo Cher. 122–123, the first of which is worth quoting: "Human kindness (comes) sparingly, and tomorrow, and if (it comes) a second time without complaint this is remarkable.
3:28; Sir 1:9–10; 51:17; Wisd 8:21; 9:17; Pss. Sol. 5:14; 4Q185 2:10–12; Did. 4:7; Herm. Mand. 9:3). In short, doubting that God will provide wisdom is not merely lacking certainty that God will answer prayer, it is in effect to live as if he were no longer perfect and complete and lacking in nothing (1:4). To doubt is to have a divided heart, evidenced in judging and competing with God and one's community (1:6–8; 3:13–4:10), and to putting oneself opposite God as a judge and therefore being a friend of the world (cf. 4:4; 2:1–13).

James' depiction of the doubting person climaxes in verse 8: "he is a double-minded man [...] unstable in all his ways" (ESV; ἄνηρ δίψυχος [...] ἀκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὀδοῖς αὐτοῦ; cf. 4:8). While double-mindedness (or double-heartedness) as a concept is found in Scripture and Jewish paraenesis prior to the Letter of James, as a term δύψυχος is apparently found for the first time in James

But your gift is abundantly good and rich, and the one whose hope is in you will not be lacking gifts" (5:13–14; OTP 2:657). There seems little doubt that James' depiction of God is being cast in the light of Greco-Roman benefaction; cf. Neyrey, Give God the Glory, chs. 1, 2, for general background, and Alicia Batten, "God in the Letter of James: Patron or Benefactor?," NTS 50 (2004): 257–272, for details.

57 Hartin, James, 60, considers "doubt" here concerns whether God can or will answer prayer; he follows Dibelius, James, 79–81: "Therefore it is the certainty that the request will be granted which Jas calls 'faith'" (81). Herm. Mand. 9.1–12 seems to drive this definition, however, possibly amending Jas 1:5–8, Mark 11:22–24 par. Matt 21:21–22 (note how doubt is "in the heart" in Mark 11:23 and Herm. Mand. 9.2, 4, 5, 7). Neither the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 11:23–24 par. Matt 21:21–22), nor James appear to use "doubt" in this somewhat circular fashion.

58 The verb διακρίνεσθαι is but one of many uses of the κρίνω- ("judge") stem in James (cf. 2:4, 12; 4:11, 12; 5:12), a role that belongs to God alone.

59 Porter, "dipsuchos," 479.

60 Various translations of verses 7 and 8 are possible, but the whole unit refers to the same person, with v. 8 in appositional relationship to v. 7; see Dibelius, James, 82; Hartin, James, 60–61.

61 Oscar J. F. Seitz, "Antecedents and Signification of the Term ΔΙΨΥΧΟΣ," JBL 66 (1947): 211–219; Oscar J. F. Seitz, "Relationship of the Shepherd of Hermas to the Epistle of James," JBL 62 (1944): 131–140, notes a connection between δύψυχος and the so-called "divided heart" of Ps 12:3b (בּלֶלֶלַל לְבֶלֶל), an awkward phrase rendered literally by the LXX, ἐν καρδίᾳ καὶ ἐν καρδίᾳ ἐλάλησαν, Ps 11:3b; cf. esp. 1 Chr 12:33; Ps 78:36–37; Hos 10:2. This expression (בּלֶלֶלַל לְבֶלֶל) initially appears to be related to deception or duplicity of speech (Ps 12:3b, תִּזְקַר יְנֵ הָפָס; LXX 11:3, χείλη δόλια). The only clear parallel to the divided heart that precedes James is Sir 1:28–29: μὴ ἀπείρωσθης φόβῳ κυρίου καὶ μὴ προσέλθης αὐτῷ ἐν καρδίᾳ δισσοσ. Another possibility—though its dating is uncertain—is T. Ash. 3:1–2: "But you, my children, do not be two-faced [διπροσώποι] like them, one good and the other evil […]. Flee from the evil tendency, destroying the devil
The Shema instructed Israel to love the Lord with "all your heart and all your soul and all your might" (Deut 6:5; cf. Tanḥ 23b §1, 3; Mark 12:29 par. Matt 22:37; Luke 10:27). This life-orientation was a reality, which the Lord—who alone knows the heart (1 Sam 16:7; 1 Kgs 8:39; 1 Chr 28:9; cf. Rom 8:27; etc.)—regularly tested (Deut 8:2; Ps 7:9). Purity or singleness of heart was therefore a feature of Jewish piety (e.g., Deut 10:12; Ps 12:3b; Ps 12:3b; cf. Jas 2:1, 18–19; 3:1–12; Matt 15:18–20 par. Mark 7:20–23). The Apostolic Fathers used δύψυχος and its cognates frequently, including the adoption of the condition of doubt on petitionary prayer. While these occurrences may have come from sources other than James, it is in James where doubt, asking—receiving, and the dangerous condition of being a ἄνηρ δύψυχος, is first found. Strangely, the stem of the other adjective used to depict the doubter in James, by your good works. For those who are two-faced are not of God, but they are enslaved to their evil desires, so that they might be pleasing to Beliar and to persons like themselves" (OTP 2:817); cf. Joel Marcus, "The Evil Inclination in the Epistle of James," CBQ 44 (1982): 616–617. See further discussion in George F. Moore, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era (2 vols.; New York: Schocken, 1929/1971), 1:486. Seitz also argues (with justification) that καιρή is equivalent to ψυχή in many of the Jewish and Christian texts and that two hearts (or an evil and a good heart) and δύψυχος can be equated, at least in their concept field. Again, the texts cited do not precede James.

62 This is a debated point, but well-argued by Porter, "dipsuchos," 469–498; contra Dibelius, James, 82–83; see esp. extended discussion of Seitz, "Antecedents," 211–219; Seitz, "Relationship," 131–140. Oscar J. F. Seitz, "Afterthoughts on the term 'Dipsychos'," NTS 4 (1958), also argues that James, 1 and 2 Clement, and Hermas (e.g., Mand. 9:1–12) all found the δύψυχος word stem in an unknown apocryphon (perhaps the Secrets of Elijah, or Eldad and Modad; cf. Seitz, "Afterthoughts," 332–333).


64 The coverage of Porter, "dipsuchos," 484–496 (up to 12th c.), is thorough and notes the following: 1 Clem. 11:2 (cf. 23:2–3 which uses διστάζοντες [a synonym of δισκρίνειν] in parallel to δύψυχος; 2 Clem. 19.2; cf. 11.2, 5.; Did. 4:4; Barn. 19:5; The Shepherd of Hermas contains too many to list (more than 50), but see next note for most important.

65 Herm. Mand. 9:1–12 is the most pertinent parallel, esp. v. 5, ἐὰν δὲ διστάσῃς ἐν τῇ καιρίᾳ σου, οὐδὲν οὐ μὴ λήμψῃ τῶν αἰτημάτων σου. οἱ γὰρ διστάζοντες εἰς τὸν θεὸν, οὐτοί ἔστιν οἱ δύψυχοι καὶ οὐδὲν ἄλοις ἐπιτυγχάνουσι τῶν αἰτημάτων αὐτῶν; "But if you doubt in your heart, you will never receive anything you have requested. Those who doubt God are of two minds, and they obtain none of their requests," (LCL, Ehrman, 2:275).
άκατάστατος, is hardly mentioned in the Apostolic Fathers (cf. 1 Clem 11:4). The whole phrase άκατάστατος ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὀδῷς αὐτοῦ in James 1:8 is epexegetical of δίψυχος, depicting the opposite of someone who is "perfect and complete, lacking in nothing" (Jas 1:4, τέλειοι καὶ ὀλόκληροι ἐν μηδενὶ λειτομένῳ).66 Clearly the one who asks for wisdom and then doubts its provision by God is someone who is fundamentally opposed to the salvation purposes of God.

The extended conditional sentence in verses 6–8 (with "doubting nothing" [μηδὲν διακρίνεσθαι] as the effective condition) is paralleled in Mark 11:22–24 (par. Matthew 21:21–22; cf. Luke 17:5–6), including the key verbs αἰτεῖν and λαμβάνειν. However, although the prayer promises of both Mark and James use the same verb "to doubt" (διακρίνεσθαι) they do not mean the same thing by it. As noted in chapter III above, in Mark 11:23 doubt referred to the inner disposition to disbelieve the power of God at work in Jesus or to suppose that such power lay within oneself. In James 1:6–8, doubt emerges as divided loyalty, refusing to trust God in the trial, which leads to giving up on the test and giving in to temptation (1:12, 13–15; the ultimate deception, 1:16). According to James, the first piece of wisdom needed and promised by God to those who pray is a single-hearted approach to God as a straightforward and generous benefactor to his children (cf. 1:17–18), particularly as one approaches trials (1:2–4, 12, 13–15).67 To do this is to ask with "faith," which, in James, implies not only belief in God's existence but also identification with his purposes and character (cf. 2:14–26).68

To sum up: the opening paragraph of the Letter of James stresses the need and possibility of participating in the divine salvation plan of perfection in the whole of life (ἐν μηδενὶ λειτομένῳ, v. 4). Praying for wisdom is the means of (re-) engaging in this divine process so as to "receive" the crown of life that God has

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66 Note the wisdom echo in the use of "way" here, particularly the "way(s) of the wicked" versus the "way(s) of the Lord"; i.e., the "two ways"; e.g., Gen 18:19: Deut 30:15; Josh 24:14–15; Pss 1:1, 6; 23:3; 119:101; Prov 1:15; 3:17; 4:14; etc.; 2 Esd 14:2; CD 1:13; 2:6; 1QS 3:21; 4:15–16; 5:10–11; Odes Sol. 11:3; 15:6; 18:14; 23:4; T. Ash. 1:3 (see OTP 1:816 n. 1.a). G. Ebel, "Walk, Run, Way, Conduct," NIDNTT 3: 935–943.
67 Porter, "dipsuchos," 482.
68 Kirk, "Meaning," 25, considers πίστις to be "childlike trust." James appears to have a more complex or integrated understanding of faith.
promised (1:12, λήμψεται; cf. v. 7). Any unwillingness to participate in God's salvation plan through single-hearted prayer for wisdom is a sure sign of a person's inner division and instability in _everything_ (ἐν πάσαις ταῖς ὀδοῖς αὐτοῦ, v. 8). It is, as Johnson expresses it, "the desire to live by both measures [i.e., that of the world and of God] at the same time." Although a strong threat is used to counter this tendency in verses 7–8, the ultimate intention of the writer is to help the readers conform to the divine pattern, enabled by God's grace (1:5, 12, 17, 18; 4:6), so as to reach the goal of the "crown of life" (1:12).

With respect to the tension between promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer, James 1:5–8, firstly, presents God (who is behind the promise) as one who is straightforward, generous, initiatory, merciful, dependable, and inviting of prayer. These qualities are reinforced in the main "definition" of the divine being in James 1:17 and developed in the contexts of the later prayer sayings (3:13–4:10; 5:13–20). Secondly, the content of the prayer promise is limited to "wisdom," not wisdom to know how to pray or what to pray (cf. Rom 8:26), but wisdom to entrust oneself to the divine plan of salvation that comes about through endurance and ultimately leads to perfection or maturity. The pathway to perfection is peppered with trials that come as part of the divine plan. Temptations that arise in the midst of these tests are not to be credited to God but to fleshly desires (1:13–15). Thirdly, the implied condition of the prayer for wisdom is "faith." Faith is opposed to "doubt," which is not so much an intellectual quality but a volitional one that goes to the heart of the petitioner who is casual or half-hearted about the process of salvation outlined in verses 2–4. To disbelieve the exhortation to petition God for wisdom of James 1:5 is to move perilously close to the "world" and its deceptions (1:16). To ask for wisdom with faith, however, is to entrust oneself to God and his eschatological plan of salvation (cf. 1:12, 21; 2:14) and to be aligned with his character (i.e., generosity and mercy). Petitionary prayer is, therefore, deeply integrated into the life of faith and the purposes of God.

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69 Note the use of λαμβάνειν in both v. 7 (with the negative) and v. 12 (as a positive).
70 Johnson, "Friendship," 176.
71 Contra Porter, "dipsuchos," 482.
72 Davids, _James_, 71, may be right in seeing 1:13–15 increasing the gravity by addressing "those who are about to abandon their resistance." Jas 1:16 would then be a climax to this charge with 1:17–18 forming a contrasting statement of God's nature (note no imperatives).
2. James 4:2–3

2 ἐπιθυμεῖτε καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε, φονεύετε 73 καὶ ζηλοῦτε καὶ οὐ δύνασθε ἐπιτυχεῖν, μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμείτε, 74 οὐκ ἔχετε διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτεῖσθαι ὡμᾶς, 3 αἰτεῖτε καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετε διότι κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε, ἵνα ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὑμῶν δαπανήσητε.

James 4:1–3 is a self-contained unit 75 within 3:13–4:10, with verses 2–3 forming part of the author's indictment of the readers (3:13–4:4) about their "envy" and "selfish ambition" (ζῆλον πικρὸν ἔχετε καὶ ἐριθείαν, 3:14, 16; cf. φονεύετε καὶ ζηλοῦτε, 4:2). 76 The heart of the unit centres on the idea of "friendship with the world" (4:4, ἡ φιλία τοῦ κόσμου, a genitive of reference), 77 which is a whole-

73 Erasmus emended φονεύετε ("you murder") to φονεύετε ("you covet") without textual support, evidently because it was too embarrassing. Johnson, James, 276–277, has satisfactorily explained that though harsh, the word φονεύετε was one of the traditional elements of a topos on envy (cf. Jas 5:6).

74 Some MSS insert καὶ after μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμείτε and before οὐκ ἔχετε, probably to balance the text with καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε in the first line and to smooth the text a little. The variant is well-attested (ὩΡΨ 322. 323. 614 and most miniscules), but so is the omission (A B 33 ἙΠ vgstww sa), which, being the more difficult reading, should be retained.

75 Davids, James, 160, notes the inclusio formed by the word "desires" in v. 1 (ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν ὑμῶν), v. 3 (ἵνα ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὑμῶν δαπανήσητε).

76 Dibelius, James, 207–208, treats Jas 3:13–4:12 in one section and also recognises envy as the main theme. Yet he considers it lacking in a "unity in train of thought." According to Johnson, "Friendship," 168 (and Johnson, "James 3:13–4:10," 327–347), however, Jas 3:13–4:10 is a self-contained call to conversion that employs the topos on envy, climaxing at the rhetorical question of 4:4, μοιχαλίδες, οὐκ οἴδατε ὅτι ἡ φιλία τοῦ κόσμου ἔχθρα τοῦ θεοῦ ἔστιν; ("Adulteresses! Do not you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?"). Hartin, James, 191–217, adopts and develops Johnson's observations, Taylor, Structure of James, 86–88, however, sees 3:13–18 as a transition unit, with its resonance of "wisdom" from 1:5, along with other verses, e.g., 1:17, 26–27. Yet, he states that the unit "coheres with and anticipates what follows" (88). What can be agreed upon is that Jas 3:13 begins a new stage in the letter, probably leading to its rhetorical and purposive climax in 4:4–6/10. See T. B. Cargal, "Review of Patrick J. Hartin, James," CBQ 66 (2004): 649–650, for further reflections. Davids, James, 156 says, "[Jas 4:1] surely intends to refer to the inner-community conflicts occasioned by the party spirit of the teachers in the previous section [i.e., 3:1–12];" cf. Franz Mussner, Der Jakobusbrief (HTKN 13/1; Freiburg: Herder, 1975), 176–177. However, Jas 3:13–4:10 is best read as addressing readers in general (esp. 3:13, Τίς σοφὸς καὶ ἐπιστήμων ἐν ὑμῖν); see Johnson, James, 268–269, for further discussion.

77 Wallace, Greek Grammar, 127.
hearted agreement with the world's values that cannot be reconciled with friendship with God (1:26–27; cf. Matt 6:24). This dichotomy is similar to that uncovered in the opening section of the letter (1:5–8). The "thinking" behind friendship with the world is "wisdom" from below and ultimately derived from the devil (3:15). The "fruit" (3:18) produced by each kind of wisdom testifies to its nature: ἀκαταστασία καὶ πᾶν φαύλον πρᾶγμα for worldly wisdom and καρπὸς δὲ δικαιοσύνης ἐν εἰρήνῃ (cf. 3:17, εἰρηνικὴ) for wisdom from above (cf. Matt 7:21–16 par. Luke 6:44; Gal 5:19–23; Sir 27:6). This polarisation of "wisdoms" in James 3:13–17—which introduces the key terms of 4:1–3 (ζῆλος καὶ ἐριφεῖα, compare 3:16 and 4:2)—is followed in James 4:1 by a question that introduces the heart of the matter: communal factions.

The rhetorical question of verse 1a ("What is the origin of the wars and fightings among you?") is followed by another in verse 1b that expects a positive answer, implying that the source of the communal factions is "your desires that wage war in your members" (ἐκ τῶν ἡδονῶν ὑμῶν τῶν στρατευομένων ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὑμῶν, where "members" refers not to the readers but to their body parts that compose a whole person; cf. 3:5, 6). Battles without originate from the battle within. But what is the nature of this internal war of the members?

Comments have been made in the discussion above on δύστοχος about the possible use in James of the doctrine of the "evil inclination" (יְסֶר חָרֵã). This idea is grounded in Genesis 6:5 and 8:21, which speak of an inclination (יְסֶר) placed by God within human beings from their formation in the beginning. According to Rabbinic teaching, human beings proved incapable of preventing their יְסֶר חָרֵã turning an opportunity to sin into a temptation to sin; the יְסֶר חָרֵã is an incessant enemy of the soul. "It is thus primarily the subjective origin of

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78 Contra Dibelius, James, 208.
79 Reading ἐν ὑμῖν as distributive rather than locative.
80 BDAG, 628, μέλος, 1.
82 Rabbi Abahu (A.D. 4th c.) read יְסֶר חָרֵã in Gen 6:6b as "grieved at his [i.e., man's] heart." The NRSV translates as, "and it grieved him [i.e., God] to his heart." Moore, Judaism, 1:480, notes the frequent rabbinic comment: "It was I that put the bad leaven in the dough." See his discussion on pp. 480–482.
temptation, or more correctly as the tempter within, that the yēser harʿā is represented in Jewish literature."83 Against this inclination, the Torah was provided as an "antiseptic" (Sir 21:11; CD 3:2–3),84 which a God-given "good inclination" (yēser tōḇ)85 could employ to win the battle against temptation and sin (1QS 8:3[?]; cf. Rom 6:16; 7:14–23; 8:5–8, 12; Gal 5:16–24). James places responsibility (note the repeated πόθεν) for personal and communal failure squarely upon the desires of the individuals in the community (ἐκ τῶν ἠδονῶν ὠμῶν τῶν στρατευομένων ἐν τοῖς μέλεσιν ὠμῶν), but he does not mention "good" or "evil" desires in competition with each other. In James 4:1–3, the community's warring comes from individual, selfish/evil desires (as spelled out in vv. 2–3) rather than a combat between two opposites.86 The debate on the influence of the yēser harʿā on James is finely-tuned, but, in the end, the book does not oppose "desire" with any kind of "good" inclination or study of the Torah.87 Nevertheless, both James and the Rabbis

83 Moore, Judaism, 1:482.
84 Moore, Judaism, 1:481, 489–496, quoting Sipre Deut. § 45 on Deut 11:18.
85 See Moore, Judaism, 1:483, 484, for origin and discussion of this later belief.
86 The noun ἡδονή is found in the plural in 4:1, 3 where it is most likely equivalent to ἐπιθυμεῖτε of v. 2 and ζῆλος καὶ ἐρυθεία of 3:16; cf. Luke 8:14 and Mark 4:17, for examples of this equivalence. James seems to have particular sins in mind rather than the evil inclination. Contra Davids, James, 157: "The source of conflict, however, is clearly the desire or yēser of the community members. No noble 'fighting for the truth' this, but a disguised form of the evil inclination, the person's fallen nature"; see also pp. 36–37, 83–85, 156–157.
87 Moore, Judaism, 1:485, 490–492. It is possible that Jas 1:13–15 is correcting a misconstrued version of the doctrine of the two inclinations. Marcus, "Evil Inclination," 606–621, argues strongly that the evil inclination has influenced James 1:13–15. Johnson, James, 194, disagrees: "[I]n the light of the role given to Satan [in the book of James, it] shows no real trace here of the 'two inclinations' […] found inchoately at Qumran and in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs." But Satan had a prominent role in some uses of the doctrine of the evil inclination in the literature of Second Temple Judaism too (e.g., T. Ash. 1:3–9; 3:1–2). It would be more precise to say that, for James, the "evil inclination" (or "desires" [τῶν ἠδονῶν ὠμῶν] in Jas 4:1) is stimulated by Satan and, not being resisted by the believer, leads to temptation, sin, and death (Jas 1:14–15). James, however, is not given to the kind of dualism present in the Testament of Asher. For example, Gustav Stählin, "ἡδονή," TDNT 2: 920, says of Jas 4:1: "Yielding to ἡδονάι in Jm. 4:1 ff. (cf. especially the ἵνα of v. 3) is unfaithfulness to God (v. 4 μοιχαλίδες) and as φιλία τοῦ κόσμου it is enmity to God and of Satanic origin (cf. Jas 4:7: ἀντίστητε τῷ διαβόλῳ)." But he then goes on to say that rabbinic teaching on the evil inclination identified it with Satan (921). This is not quite true; Moore, Judaism, 1:493, states that, "[t]he usual expression [for the evil inclination] is impersonal."
agree that repentance is the remedy for giving into desires and that God is a God who forgives (Jas 4:7–10).  

James 4:2–3 is susceptible to various arrangements. The editors of the 27th Edition of Novum Testamentum Graece have punctuated the verses as follows:

2 ἐπιθυμεῖτε καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε,  
φονεύετε καὶ ζηλούτε καὶ οὐ δύνασθε ἐπιτυχεῖν,  
μάχεσθε καὶ πολέμειτε,  
οὐκ ἔχετε διὰ τὸ μὴ ἀιτεῖσθαι ύμᾶς,  
3 αἰτεῖτε καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετε διότι κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε,  
ἔνα ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὑμῶν δαπανήσῃτε.

2 You desire and you do not have,  
you murder and are envious and you do not obtain,  
you fight and wage war,  
you do not have because you do not ask,  
3 you ask and you do not receive  
because you ask with wrong intent,  
in order that you may indulge your desires.

Strong witnesses (𝔓 322. 323. 614, etc.) add καὶ at the beginning of verse 2d to balance the second plural + καὶ + second plural pattern. Dibelius considers this addition original, arguing that without it, "you fight and wage war" leaves the reader "hanging." With the καὶ inserted, Dibelius sees an inverse parallel structure:

a₁ ἐπιθυμεῖτε  
καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε,  
b₁ φονεύετε καὶ ζηλούτε  
καὶ οὐ δύνασθε ἐπιτυχεῖν,  
b₂ μάχεσθε καὶ πολέμειτε,  
καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτεῖσθαι ύμᾶς,  
a₂ αἰτεῖτε  
καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετε διότι κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε, κτλ.

a₁ You desire  
and you do not have,  
b₁ you murder and are envious  
and you do not obtain,  
b₂ you fight and wage war,  
and you do not have because you do not ask,  
a₂ you ask  
and you do not receive, because you ask with wrong intent, etc.

This structuring of verses 2–3 captures the rhetoric of action and consequences of action well—James' prophetic analysis of the situation. But Dibelius' justification for

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88 Moore, Judaism, 1:485, 490–492, 497–534.  
89 Dibelius, James, 218.
the textual amendment is not convincing and neither is the chiasm, which lacks specific vocabulary and content.

Hartin and Johnson propose verse 2 should be divided as follows:

Επιθυμεῖτε καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε, [X]
φονεύετε. [Y]
καὶ ζηλοῦτε καὶ οὗ δύνασθε ἐπιτυχεῖν, [X']
μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε. [Y']
οὐκ ἔχετε διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτείσθαι ὑμᾶς, [Z]90

You desire and you do not have,
so you murder.
And you are filled with envy and you cannot obtain,
so you fight and wage war.
You do not have because you do not ask.91

This punctuation divides φονεύετε from καὶ ζηλοῦτε, creating a pattern of two verbs joined by a καὶ [X, X'] followed by a result clause [Y, Y'] and concluding with a line that explains the root of the problem [Z]. This sentence division captures the author’s rhetoric well but can be taken further if combined with Dibelius’ structure:

2 ἐπιθυμεῖτε [X1]
καὶ οὐκ ἔχετε, [Y1]
φονεύετε καὶ ζηλοῦτε [X2]
καὶ οὗ δύνασθε ἐπιτυχεῖν, [Y2]
μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε, [X3]
………………….. [Y3?]
οὐκ ἔχετε διὰ τὸ μὴ αἰτείσθαι ὑμᾶς, [Z1]
3 αἰτείτε [X4]
καὶ οὗ λαμβάνετε [Y4]
διότι κακῶς αἰτεῖσθε, [Z2i]
ἐνα ἐν ταῖς ἡδοναῖς ὑμῶν δαπανήσητε. [Z2ii]

You desire
and you do not have,
you murder and are envious,
and you do not obtain
you wage war and do battle
……………………
You do not have because you do not ask!
You ask
and you do not receive
because you ask wrongly

90 The letters in square brackets have been distinguished from the normal A, B, C pattern to prevent confusion. The latter refer strictly to the prayer-promise pattern, which, though recognizable in Jas 4:2–3, is as clear as that found in 1:5–8.
91 Hartin, James, 190, 196–198; Johnson, James, 267, 276–277.
in order that you might spend on your desires.

This pattern is more compact, consisting of a 2nd plural indicative [X] followed by a consequential negated 2nd plural indicative [Y], with consequence explanation statements at the end of the series [Z].

Line [Y3] is an apostrophe in the flow of the argument in verse 2 which concludes with an explanation of the whole of [X1]–[Y3] in [Z1]. This X–Y–Z pattern is also repeated in verse 3 with two conclusions [Z2ii] forming a climax to verses 1–3. Clearly [Y3] is a tenuous proposition, but it attempts to make sense of the stronger textual tradition in determining the logic of the verse. The breaking of the X–Y rhythm gains the readers' attention, perhaps forcing them to "fill in the blank." This suggestion gains credence when the stepped intensification in the [X] lines is given more attention (ἐπιθυμεῖτε → φονεύετε καὶ ζηλοῦτε → μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε).

The verbs move from the inner motives to the external actions and from the originating individual motivation through to the final, communal consequence of what effectively amounts to ἀκαταστασία. The final line [Z1] completely shifts the ground of the discussion from earthly patterns of fulfilling desires to the recommended divine prayer pattern of seeking gifts from the God who gives to all generously without reproach (cf. 1:5–8, 17–18). The horizontal plane of human desire and action is inseparable from the vertical plane of divine response in James.

Frustrated desires within the community should be resolved by prayer. However, even when this occurs, base motives lie at the roots of the readers' piety (ἰνα ἐν ταῖς ἥδοναις ὑμῶν δαπανήσητε, v. 3).

James 4:3 concludes and climaxes the accusation of verses 1–3. It repeats the X–Y–Z pattern of verse 2 and re-gathers the critique about "desires" that control the readers spoken of in verses 1–2. The verse also repeats the verb σῖτεῖν also found in James 1:5, but this time using λαμβάνειν instead of διδόναι for the promise.

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92 For καί as a result see BDAG, 495, καί, 1.b.ζ (καί may be used "to introduce a result that comes fr[om] what precedes").

93 This may be intended as a "chain" sequence (cf. 1:2–4, 13–15, 19), which, though building on v. 1, works in roughly the reverse order of that verse. Whereas v. 1 moves from external manifestation (πόλεμοι […] μάχαι) to internal motivation (τῶν ἥδων ὑμῶν), v. 2 begins with ἐπιθυμεῖτε (best seen as a stylistic equivalent of τῶν ἥδων ὑμῶν) and concludes with μάχεσθε καὶ πολεμεῖτε.

94 The lack of a perfect syntactical parallel in lines Z1 and Z2ii need not disqualify this pattern, since functionally lines Z1 and Z2 are quite similar (introduced by the causal particles διὰ τὸ and διότι respectively), giving reasons why the X and Y lines are valid.
component (Jas 1:7; cf. Matt 7:8 par. Luke 11:10; Matt 21:22; John 16:24; 1 John 3:22).\(^{95}\) The twist in the unit towards prayer unmasks the readers' deep-seated adultery as they play religion (4:4; cf. 1:26–27). Their vain self-justifying prayer robs the whole community in order to gratify personal desires.

The exegesis of James 1:2–8 above provided a four-step prayer promise: (1) in the midst of various trials, (2) pray for wisdom from God who gives to all straightforwardly and without reproach, (3) yet do so with faith in God's good and generous character and not divisive doubt, and then, (4) you shall receive your request. In James 4:2–3 the same four elements are applied in an opposite fashion to a communal problem: (1) they did not recognise their "battles" as trials, and therefore (2) they did not pray for wisdom, indeed, (3) if they did pray they it was not with faith in God's perfect generosity leading them towards the goal of perfection, but in order to meet their base desires, and so (4) they did not receive what they asked for.

For James, the vertical/divine orientation of prayer is inseparable from the horizontal/communal and moral nature of Christian existence. The petitioner's heart must conform to the dominant character of God in James: God's impartial grace or generosity.

One final element to be noticed about this prayer-promise section is how prayer is both the means of accessing heavenly benefits and of resisting satanic temptation. The well-being of the individual and the harmony of the community are shielded by prayer. James' concern is not only for the spiritual and relational existence of the community but also for those who are about to fall into error (cf. 1:16; 5:19–20). This concern was obvious in the previous prayer promise (1:5–8) and re-emerges here in 4:2–3. The implanted word is able to save one's soul (1:21, 22–25) and therefore every effort must be given to return the erroneous one from his/her ways back to the implanted word. James 4:1–3 has this very function, warning readers about the potential dangers of their desires (ignited from "below") to wage war among their members and lead them astray (cf. 5:19–20). Perfection for James is not sinlessness but the open-hearted (and single-hearted) application of the grace of God in one's own life and towards others. This takes place through prayer that is assured of being heard. The next part of this unit reminds readers that God's grace continues

\(^{95}\) The contrast between αἰτεῖται [...] δοθήσεται (1:5) and αἰτεῖτε [...] καὶ οὐ λαμβάνετε (4:3) would not have gone unnoticed. οὐ λαμβάνετε matches the outcome of 1:7–8: μη [...] λήψεται τι παρὰ τοῦ κυρίου.
to be available to those who turn back to God and away from the devil (4:6–10). This grace is promised to those who "draw near" through prayer to God in sincere repentance that demonstrates complete dependence upon God and impartiality towards others. The final prayer promise of James 5:13–18 will reinforce this communal aspect of petitionary prayer.

The implications of the prayer promise of James 4:2–3 for the thesis question are not as rich as the first prayer promise in 1:5–8. However, there is enough evidence to support the claim that the text assumes a prayer-promise framework, probably that outlined in 1:5–8. If the prayer sayings of James are cumulative then James 4:2–3 may be seen as providing an example of the kind of tests that one "falls upon" for which wisdom from above (and its attendant benefits) is required and will be given should it be requested properly. The theological–moral framework of prayer laid out in James 1:2–8 is supplemented here with communal requirements. Petitions to God must embrace his people's well-being as well as his generous and pure character. Although bold petition is not specifically addressed in this text, the statement of consequence [Z1] delineated above only makes sense if such openness exists. However, the emphasis of the section falls not on the openness of the petition before a generous God but on the motive and actions of the petitioner. The petitioner is limited or conditioned by the requirement for forgiveness and mutual love within

96 The conditional command–promise framework of prayer is also found in the exhortation to repentance in James 4:7–10, reinforcing in a positive way the teaching of both 4:2–3 and 1:5–8.


10 ταπεινώθητε ἐνῷ πιον κυρίου [B3] καὶ υψώσει ὑμᾶς. [C3]

The call for repentance is prophetic in mode and resonates with the cycle of sin→disaster/sickness→penitence→restoration found throughout the OT, including the healing episodes; cf. Klaus Seybold and Ulrich B. Mueller, Sickness and Healing (trans. Douglas W. Stott; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1981). Perhaps the final prayer text in James 5:13–18 is being presented as a result of the divisions in 3:13–4:3—although the combative mood of the present section is not found in the conclusion to the letter.

97 There are echoes here of wisdom literature's view of prayer, particularly as established in 1 Kgs 3:3–15: since Solomon prayed for wisdom, God gave him its attendant benefits.
the community, which is also protected by petition. This same requirement is found in the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:12 par. Luke 11:4) as well as in the Synoptic and Johannine prayer promises (Matt 6:14–15 par. Mark 11:25; cf. John 15:16).

3. James 5:13–18

a. Issues and Context
James 5:13–18 is constructed around prayer, with the verb [προσπέρασε]εύχεσθαι (or cognate) found seven times. The unit is the longest prayer instruction in the New Testament outside the Gospels. Strictly speaking, however, only parts of James 5:13–18 treat the theme of petitionary prayer for self, the theme of this study (specifically, vv. 13, 17–18). Other parts of the text concern intercessory prayer, that is, the making of a request for someone other than oneself (e.g., vv. 14–15, 16). However, given the way that the petitionary prayer is developed in James 1:5–6 and 4:2–3—and the climactic place of the current section in the letter as a whole—there are good reasons to consider 5:13–18 as a development of the preceding prayer-promise sections (1:5–8; 4:2–3) applied to community relationships.

Most commentators regard James 5:13–18 as part of the concluding remarks of the book, though disagreement remains on whether the conclusion begins at 5:7 or 5:12. There is a significant change of mood in this section from that found in the introduction and body of the Letter of James. The five-fold repetition of "brothers" (ἀδελφοί, 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19, absent from 3:13–4:10) and the absence of James'...
polarizing style, display the tenderness of a writer who is no longer approaching his audience in a prophetic mode but viewing them as a more unified group.

Healing is a special theme of James 5:13–18 and needs a comment here, particularly with regard to the recent application of medical anthropology to Greco-Roman and Jewish "healthcare systems" and their refraction into New Testament texts.\(^{100}\) Simply put, health and sickness in the ancient Mediterranean world were viewed as part of the status (or, being) of an individual within the community and not only his or her function or output in the economy. Sickness often meant being excluded, alone, and devalued. Three comments may be made for the exegesis of James 5:13–18: (1) illness, particularly prolonged illness, put one outside the community. Examples from the Pentateuch are sufficient to demonstrate this point (e.g., Lev 13:1–46; 14:1–32; 15:1–15). To touch a sick person or even to associate with them was taboo. Although James stresses purity (e.g., 1:27; 3:10–12, 26), he has embraced a Jesus-like attitude to dealing with illness.\(^{101}\) (2) Restoration from illness not only consisted in returning the person to work (i.e., a functional outcome) but also on restoring them to relationships (i.e., a state or condition of well-being).\(^{102}\) (3) People within the ancient world of James would have had greater interest in the (spiritual) meaning of the illness rather than its cause and would view the healing


\(^{101}\) See Elliott, "James in Rhetorical Perspective," 73–75, for a presentation of James' purity and pollution categories.

\(^{102}\) See discussion of this point in Avalos, *Health Care and Christianity*, 23–27, though he has no specific discussion of Jas 5:13–18.
process holistically, so that it encompassed the physical, the relational, and the spiritual realms. The individual's illness reflected the community's health.

This analysis fits the book of James well where the community's "illness" (e.g., 4:1–3) is perceived to have spiritual origins. As noted in the previous sections, James considers some members of the audience to be in the "danger zone" between faith and doubt, while others have stepped over that line (1:2–8), particularly evident in their selfish desires (3:13–4:10), which have resulted in them being labeled δίψυχος ("double-minded"; 1:8; 4:8), both personally and corporately. Some are perilously close to being enemies of God and hence in the realm of the devil (cf. 1:13–15, 16; 2:19; 3:15–16; 4:7). Once ἀκαταστασία becomes the status quo sickness is the condition of the community and its members. The exegeses above have shown that the personal (inner) realm is inseparable from the community (horizontal) and the cosmic (vertical) realms in James. James 5:13–18 adds that holistic healing can only come about when all three realms are dealt with appropriately through prayer. Healing, therefore, may be considered a symbol of the longed-for peace and eschatological salvation expressed elsewhere in the book of James (e.g., 3:13–4:10).

b. Exegesis

i. James 5:13–16a

James 5:13–16 employs the familiar three-step conditional sentence syntax of the prayer promises in James (cf. 1:5–6; 4:2–3): the reason/context for prayer [A], the command to pray [B], followed by [C] the promise of answer or fulfilment.

104 So also Kollmann, Jesus, 345.
105 Albl, "Health Care System," 126–133.
106 ἁπαξλευτικός is used in vv. 15, 19 (cf. 1:21) of both physical and eschatological ailments. The view that James is not addressing physical healing in 5:13–16 requires so much adjustment to straightforward reading as to be untenable. See Hayden, "Calling the Elders," 258–266, for a recent example. The issue of bodily healing arises from this text as a theological question as well; cf. Moo, "Divine Healing," 191–209, and John Wilkinson, Health and Healing: Studies in the New Testament Principles and Practice (Edinburgh: Handsel, 1980). The present examination does not treat the question of the later use of Jas 5:14–15 as a support for extreme unction. Charles Pickar, "Is Anyone Sick among You?," CBQ 7 (1945): 165–174, is perhaps the last scholar to defend this implication from the text.
This section of James begins with the individual within the community (ἐν ὑμῖν, vv. 13a, 14a), then moves to community representatives (elders, v. 14b), back to the individual again (v. 15), and then finally back to the community by way of a main conclusion (οὖν, v. 16). The alternating sequence between individual and community (which includes both commands and promises) reinforces the vertical–horizontal integration already noted. The use of threefold repetition (three circumstances [vv. 13a–14a], three commands [v. 14b–d], and three promises [v. 15a–c]) provides a rhythm and unity to the section.

James 5:13–14 continues the broad invitation to petitionary prayer found in 1:5–6 and assumed in 4:2–3 (note the indefinite pronoun τις and the third person singular verbs in v. 13, cf. 1:5). Verse 13 is a general two-part promise that covers all life’s circumstances. It not only fits the overall thrust of James on whole-of-life religion (1:26–27), but also encapsulates all biblical prayer, which moves between praise and petition. The unqualified nature of the verse means that one may assume that such a petition will be granted in the circumstance outlined in verse 13a and that God is pleased to be praised for the good things referred to in verse 13b. Verse 14a names a particular circumstance in which prayer should be offered (ἀσθενεί). It

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13 Κακοπαθεί τις ἐν ὑμῖν, [A1]

προσευχέσθω· [B1]

εὐθυμεί τις, [A2]

ψαλέτω· [B2]

14 ἀσθενεί τις ἐν ὑμῖν, [A3]

προσκαλεσάθω τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας
cαι προσευχάθωσαν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν

ἀλείψαντες [αὐτὸν]107 ἐλαίῳ ἐν τῷ νόματι τοῦ κυρίου. [B3]

καὶ ἡ εὐχή τῆς πίστεως σώσει τὸν κάμποντα
cαι ἔγερεὶ αὐτὸν ὁ κύριος

κἂν ἀμαρτίας ἢ πεποιηκώς, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ. [C1]

16a ἐξομολογεῖσθε οὖν ἀλλήλοις τὰς ἀμαρτίας [B4i]

καὶ εὐχέσθε ὑπὲρ ἀλλήλων [B4ii]

ὅτις ιαθήτε. [C2]

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107 The inclusion of αὐτὸν is supported by Ν Α Ψ 048vsδ 1739 Μ. It is omitted by B

P 1243 pc vg mas sa mss, and so the decision is not easy. It was omitted in NA25 but

included in NA26, 27. The influence of the previous line cannot be ruled out. The

overall sense of the clause would remain if the word were not original.

108 Dibelius, James, 251–252.

109 ἀσθενεῖ in v. 14a should not be reduced to a general idea of weakness in this context, but retain its more usual meaning of physical illness, to "be sick." The person in mind is physically, emotionally, or mentally incapacitated in some way that
follows the same pattern as verse 13 and so carries the same expectations of success, but the introduction of the elders' involvement breaks the sequence. The text does not give a clear reason for this, but in view of the communal focus of the body of the letter—including the previous prayer text (4:1–3)—it is not too surprising to have this reinforced.\(^\text{110}\) It is possible that the person is too sick to pray for him- or herself and requires intercession, but this seems overruled by the first command—directed to an individual—to "summon the elders of the church." (προσκαλεσάσθω τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους τῆς ἐκκλησίας), though one should not be too precise at this point since the imperative could easily imply "have the elders summoned."

The way that the commands are expressed in verse 14b is revealing.\(^\text{111}\) The direction-specific instruction for "praying upon (or, over) him" (προσευξάσθωσαν ἐπὶ αὐτόν) reinforces the need for physical proximity or presence of another human being. The anointing, being performed verbally, "in name of the Lord" (ἐν τῷ ὄνοματι τοῦ κυρίου), reinforces the vertical or divine dimension of prayer.\(^\text{112}\)

prevents them from partaking in relational and/or vocational activity; cf. BDAG, 142, ἀσθενέω, 1; Peterson, "Prayer in the General Epistles," 110 and notes. Here we disagree with the recent, but very thorough treatment, by Warrington, "James 5:14-18," 346–51, who regards both terms (ἀσθενεῖ and τὸν κάμνοντα) under the heading of "weakness," which includes illness.\(^\text{110}\) πρεσβυτέρους in this context most likely signifies not officials within church polity or someone with special gifts of healing, but leaders within Christian households. See the recent study of R. Alistair Campbell, The Elders: Seniority within Earliest Christianity (trans. The Elders; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994), and the comments of Hartin, James, 266–267.\(^\text{111}\) The actions implied in the clause προσευξάσθωσαν ἐπὶ αὐτόν ἀλείψαντες αὐτὸν ἐλαίῳ ἐν τῷ ὄνοματι τοῦ κυρίου, are probably contemporaneous and inseparable; so Davids, James, 193. Johnson, James, 331, on the basis of the aorist participle (ἀλείψαντες), places the anointing as the first event. This is not a strong conclusion given that both the verb and the participle are in the aorist tense and that ἀλείψαντες occurs second in the series.\(^\text{112}\) Johnson, James, 332 comments, "The phrase ἐπ’ αὐτόν (‘over him’) is, however, unattested in the LXX or NT. Usually a prayer is said to be ‘in behalf’ of someone…or ‘concerning someone.’" Davids, James, 193, comments: "[The elders] pray over (ἐπ’) the person (the preposition gives the picture of the prayer directed toward the person or perhaps of hands laid upon the person in prayer and anointing)." Johnson, James, 332, summarising earlier commentators, says, "The phrase could mean either literally to pray ‘over’ the prostrate sick person […] or to direct the prayer ‘towards’ the sick one […] in the sense of the ‘invocation of the Lord’s name,’" citing Jas 2:7 as a parallel. Dibelius, James, 252, suggests that ἐν τῷ ὄνοματι τοῦ κυρίου refers to the invocation proper rather than the mode of or reason for the anointing/praying; he notes that magic may be involved.
invocation connected with the anointing (ἐν τῷ ὄνοματι τοῦ κυρίου; cf. John 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26; Eph 5:19–20) directs attention to "our glorious Lord Jesus Christ" of James 2:1 (cf. 1:1), for whose sake the readers are to act impartially. Both the prayer and the anointing of verse 14 are intended to be intimate actions, not distant ones. In the command to pray, the elders, as keepers and examples of community standards, are being directed to act according to a different standard to that of the surrounding culture with respect to sickness. Verse 14b, therefore, insists upon the integration of the divine, the community, and the physical realms in an act of prayer to which a promise will be attached.

Commentators have given much attention to the meaning or purpose of the anointing with oil (ἀλειψάντες ἐλαίῳ) in verse 14. There is evidence for the practice of anointing the sick in both the Hellenistic and Jewish worlds, often for a medicinal purpose. In a recent discussion of the role of oil in James 5:14, Robert Karris argues that the word is "capable of multiple meanings, namely: medicinal, symbol of life, eschatological renewal." He correctly concludes that the power of the healing event, however, is not in the oil, but in the name of the Lord and in prayer.

The only New Testament parallel to the sick being anointed with oil (in a similar healing instruction) is Mark 6:12–13:

12 Καὶ ἔξελθοντες ἐκήρυξαν ἕνα μετανοώσιν,
13 καὶ δαιμόνια πολλὰ ἐξέβαλλον,
καὶ ἀλειφων ἐλαίῳ πολλούς ἀρρώστους καὶ ἐθεράπευον.

114 It possible, but unlikely, that these elders are the same people that Jas 3:1–12 and 3:13–4:10 are addressing.
116 Shogren, "Will God Heal Us?," 101–104.
118 Warrington, "Elijah in James," 354, agrees: "Jewish writings refer to the medicinal properties of oil, though the term 'anoint' (aleiphō) [...] is never used in a medicinal context, nor is there any evidence that oil was administered in the context of prayer." Avalos, *Health Care and Christianity*, 75–87, does not deal with Jas 5:14, but highlights the distinctiveness of faith in the "name" of the Lord Jesus as the key element in healing as against the medicinal power of oil in the healing strategies of the religions and cultures of the Mediterranean region.
The underlined words are found in James 5:14, which may depend upon the Gospel of Mark or a common source.\textsuperscript{119} There is, however, no reference to prayer in the context of Mark, so the parallel is not complete.\textsuperscript{120}

The uniqueness of the instruction to the elders in James 5:14 should not be watered down or explained in a way that is theologically compatible with a predetermined schema.\textsuperscript{121} In this text, bold petition (v. 13) is followed by bold summoning of elders, who are instructed to attend the sick person and pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord (v. 14). This manifold action directs attention to the Lord whose presence will—according to verse 15—bring about healing, which is the presumed content of the elders' prayer in verse 14. In the whole process, cultural taboos about illness are overcome and unity within the community expressed in such a way that the character of the present Lord will be honoured. If the elders are to "hold the faith of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ without partiality" (Jas 2:1), then a united physical action is required as they come before God in prayer invoking Jesus' name in anointing the sick person.

The promise of verse 15 is a consequence of the elders' actions in verse 14.\textsuperscript{122} It consists of three interconnected and syntactically similar promises:

- The prayer of faith will save the sick person.
- The Lord will raise him.
- Whatever sins he has committed will be forgiven him.

The whole verse operates as an unconditional and holistic answer to the prayer, anointing, and invocation of the Lord's name by the elders.\textsuperscript{123} The first promise uses the contested phrase ἡ ἐπιστέωσις πίστεως ("the prayer of faith"). While it is

\textsuperscript{119} The three components of Jesus' ministry, summarised earlier in Mark (preaching, exorcism, and healing the sick; cf. Mark 1:32, 39; 3:7–12), are clearly reflected in Jas 5:14–16a.
\textsuperscript{120} The question of the role of prayer in Jesus' healings has been dealt with in ch. III.C.3 above, and need not be rehearsed here.
\textsuperscript{121} Warrington, "James 5:14-18," 363, links prayer with "in the name of the Lord" and takes it to mean "to pray in accordance with his will." However, James does not link prayer with "the name of the Lord" but anointing. Warrington's point may be better made from John 14:13–14 and 15:16, though here the will of the Lord is that his mission might be completed. See Bietenhard, "Name," 654.
\textsuperscript{122} BDAG, 495, καί, 1.b.ξ., states that καί may be used "to introduce a result that comes fr[om] what precedes."
\textsuperscript{123} The first two promises are clearly unconditional while the third promise is conditioned only on whether the person has sinned (καν ἐμφατικάς ἡ πεποιηκώς κτλ.) and not on some event that they must fulfil in the future.
possible that this phrase refers to some kind of charismatic healing gift, the preceding consequential καὶ implies that it is a summary of the threefold instruction in verse 14 (prayer, anointing, invocation). "Faith" in this phrase should be connected to its earlier uses in James, where its object is a God who is a generous giver of every good gift and yet whose moral character must not be excised when he is addressed and whose people must not be ignored or mistreated. Under such conditions the petitioning elders and the sick man may be assured of divine healing and individual restoration, the most likely meaning of the verb σῴζειν here.

The second promise (καὶ ἐγερεῖ ὁ κύριος) probably repeats the previous one—that is, it is a reference to the sick person being healed—but the mention of ὁ κύριος (left to last for emphasis) brings a new emphasis. Together with the noun πίστις, the whole incident may be intended to recall the healings of Jesus recorded in the Gospels. The theme of the forgiveness of sins at the end of the verse (ἀφεθήσεται) also points in this direction. Forgiveness, being raised, and being healed are all found in the episode of Jesus' healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:3–12 par. Matt 9:2–8; Luke 5:18–26). It is possible that the raising of the sick in Jesus' name in James 5:14–16 is intended as a continuation of Jesus' earthly healing ministry by the risen Lord (cf. Acts 3:6–7, 16). If so, then the invocation of the name of Jesus in verse 14 could mean that the elders are to call upon the risen (and glorious, 2:1) Lord Jesus Christ who is present to raise others from what ails them.

125 πίστις used in Jas 1:3, 6; 2:1, 5, 14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26; the verb is found in 2:19, 23.
126 There is considerable literature on this theme. For Mark's Gospel see, e.g., Seybold and Mueller, Sickness and Healing, 158–165, Marshall, Faith, passim; Yeung, Faith in Jesus, passim.
127 Using σῴζειν, but this has extended connotations in James, cf. 1:21; 2:14; 4:12; 5:20.
128 The perfect passive of ἀφεθήσεται is used in Mark 2:5, 9, and ἐγερεῖν is found in 2:9, 11, 12. Note the parallel in b. Ned. 41a: "The sick person will not arise from his sickness until one has forgiven him all his sins"; Seybold and Mueller, Sickness and Healing, 166.
129 The integration of spiritual and physical realms is clearly present in gospel healing episodes as well, as noted by Seybold and Mueller, Sickness and Healing, 165–166: "Actual healing of the sick person was thus not only a restoration of his physical well-being, but, in the NT, also aimed at the acceptance of the whole person by God."
Verse 15 would then perform the function of a promise that the present Lord Jesus will act upon such a prayer.\textsuperscript{130}

The third promise of verse 15 connects healing with forgiveness (καὶ ἀμαρτίας ἢ πεποιηκός, ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ), reinforcing James' message of the inseparability of personal, physical and spiritual health. While James does not see sin as a cause of sickness, the combination of the two themes in verses 15 and 16 alongside the healing context of verses 14 and 15 means that there must be some connection between the two. What specific sins would be in mind? Earlier prayer teaching in James highlighted doubt and selfish desires (1:6–8; 4:1–3), resulting in "double-mindedness" (δίψυχος) and the breakdown of community relations (ἀκατάστασις). Verse 16 introduces the community dimension back into the discussion with a command to confess sins to one another and to pray for one another. The restoration of a sick brother to the community is meant to lead reconciliation with God and one another. Health is holistic: spiritual, physical, communal, and individual (cf. 3:13–4:10).\textsuperscript{131} The individual's need requires the community to participate at a physical, psychological, and spiritual level, that is, to be at one with the person. All is not well in the audience of James as the exegesis of James 4:2–3 has shown. The community must be healed from the desires that have caused it to be in disarray. The combination of reconciliation (i.e., forgiveness) and healing touches the individual and the community, the physical and the non-physical, the horizontal and the vertical, and sets the tone for successful petition in the Letter of James.\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{130} William R. Baker, "Christology in the Epistle of James," \textit{EQ} 74 (2002): 56: "If the elders are praying in the name of Jesus in 5:14, then their 'faith' mentioned in 5:15 must be in the power of Jesus' name to heal. Then when 5:15 also mentions that 'the Lord will raise him up,' this also most likely refers to the power instigated by the name of Jesus. Just as Jesus raised up many bedridden in his miracles, so he still raises up the sick through the elders of the church […]."

\textsuperscript{131} Johnson, \textit{James}, 335.

\textsuperscript{132} A close parallel to this section of James, and 4:2–3, is found in Sir 28:2–5: "2 Forgive your neighbor the wrong he has done, and then your sins will be pardoned when you pray. 3 Does anyone harbor anger against another, and expect healing from the Lord? 4 If one has no mercy toward another like himself, can he then seek pardon for his own sins? 5 If a mere mortal harbors wrath, who will make an atoning sacrifice for his sins?" (NRSV)
Although James 5:16b–18 is not grammatically connected with what precedes, the section is well integrated both by the theme of prayer (vv. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18) and by the familiar prayer pattern of circumstance [A], petition [B], and result [C].

16b Πολὺ ἵσχει δέησις δικαίου ἐνέργουμένη.
17 Ήλίας ἀνθρωπος ἦν ὁμοιοπαθὴς ἡμῖν, [A1]
    καὶ προσευχὴ προσημέετο τοῦ μὴ βρέξαι, [B1]
    καὶ οὐκ ἐβρέχεσν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
    ἐνιαυτοὺς τρεῖς καὶ μὴνας ἔξ. [C1]
18 καὶ πάλιν προσημέετο, [that it would rain] [B2]
    καὶ ὁ οὐρανὸς ὑετὸν ἐδώκεν [C2i]
    καὶ ἥ γη ἐβλάστησεν τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῆς. [C2ii]

The link statement (v. 16b) brings a new theme into the prayer-promise theme of James: the adjective δίκαιος. This adjective is also found in James 5:6, which indicates some in the audience are experiencing persecution. This resonates with some uses of the word in the Old Testament prophets (e.g., Amos 2:6; 5:12). The present context echoes some of the lament psalms in which the Lord's protection of the persecuted righteous is enhanced by the fact that he will "hear their cry" (e.g., Ps 34:18). Perhaps readers are also to recall the blood of "righteous" Abel that cried out to God from the ground (Gen 4:1–9; cf. 1 John 3:11–24, esp. vv. 21–22). The adjective δίκαιος may direct other readers to the first mention of Noah in Scripture, a prominent patriarch in parts of the Second Temple literature (cf. Gen 6:9 LXX, Νῶς ἀνθρωπὸς δίκαιος τέλειος ὅν ἐν τῇ γενεᾷ αὐτοῦ τῷ θεῷ ἐγνώστησεν Νῶς). Such connections tie in well with James' introductory focus on perfection (cf. 1:2–4) and the book's direction to readers that they not be friends of the world but of God (4:4). From this all too brief sample, δίκαιος in James 5:16b probably includes both vertical and horizontal aspects of conformity with God's character and will as well as the suffering context that such a stance brings within the world. The petition of a "righteous person" is not only mighty in its being answered by God, but also functions in James as a summary of the preceding prayer instructions.

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134 "Righteousness" was mentioned in Jas 1:21.
James 5:17–18 is surely intended to reinforce 5:16b, but why is Elijah chosen as the example? Jewish traditions about Elijah's praying are found in the Hebrew Bible (1 Kgs 17:1; 18:42), Second Temple material (4 Ezra 7.109; Sir 48:3), and the New Testament (Luke 4:25). Elijah is frequently presented as a valiant (final) prophet and judge figure (e.g., Mal 3:23–24 [MT]; Sir 48:1–14; Mark 9:11–13 par. Matthew 17:1–9; Luke 9:28–36). James' emphasis that Elijah was a man of like feelings and circumstances (ὁμοιοπαθῆς ἡμῖν) would have struck many readers as strange, given his revered status. Warrington has recently argued that Elijah's suffering is being stressed by James (cf. 1 Kgs 19:1–10), but the Elijah story and its later employment does not emphasize this aspect. What all the traditions do hold in common, however, is that God's power was displayed through him (note the merismus of "heaven" and "earth" in vv. 17–18 to convey the universe). The reason for referring to Elijah as ὁμοιοπαθῆς ἡμῖν is that, in spite of his reputation as a mighty man of faith, Elijah was not unfamiliar with the anxieties that attach themselves to all humans (e.g., 1 Kgs 19). That is, righteousness does not exclude susceptibility to weakness or illness for God desires to hear the prayers of the weak who hesitantly come before him with incredibly bold petitions. The answer to Elijah's prayer (v. 18) complements other prayer sections of James (cf. 1:2–4; 3:17–18) that highlight the inner character of the petitioner (cf. 3:13–4:10) as one of the conditions of his or her success in prayer. James 5:16b–18 conveys the thought that the prayer of the righteous leads to real and lasting change from God's hand—the land was "healed" and became fruitful again (5:18). The symbolism of such renewal is hard to deny given the emphasis on regeneration and eschatology throughout the book. Moreover, the interconnection between community and cosmology would not have been lost on ancient readers: the God who gives wisdom (τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ, 1:5) is also in charge of the heavens that "gave rain" (ὕετῶν ἐδωκεν, 5:18).

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136 BDAG, 706, ὁμοιοπαθῆς.
138 Warrington's argument that ὁμοιοπαθῆς ἡμῖν implies "of like suffering" (365, n. 163) fails to convince.
139 Wilhelm Michaelis, "πάσχο, κτλ.," TDNT 5: 939.
140 See Warrington, "Elijah in James," 217–227, for further discussion on the purpose behind the illustration of Elijah in James.
c. Conclusion

Through the vehicles of sickness and healing prayer, James 5:13–18 brings the letter to a climax. The underlying issues of horizontal and vertical disharmony break through the surface and find resolution in a way that gathers the theological and pastoral aspects of the letter into a single message. The integration of the individual and the community as well as the physical and spiritual realms within the command–promise framework of a prayer instruction signal, once again, the importance of petitionary prayer and its limitations in James. James 5:13–18 reinforces and extends the themes of the prayer promises and restrictions considered in the earlier sections of this chapter. Firstly, the generosity of God is heard in the initial unqualified prayer instructions of verse 13, the instruction to pray for the sick in verses 14-16a, and in the example of Elijah that reinforces his power to control cosmic events towards his plan. Secondly, the eschatological goal of perfection towards which the prayer for wisdom is aimed is seen here to be neither external nor distant but one that is being brought into reality through the physical and spiritual healing of both the individual and the community (and the cosmos). Thirdly, the condition of submissive and obedient faith required of all in the community, especially its leaders, is expanded to include repentance of sins by the whole community. Of special interest in this prayer unit is the role of the risen Lord Jesus in whose presence prayer is offered, anointing is performed, and restoration takes place (5:15–16). Similarities with the healings of the Synoptic Gospels suggest the continuation of Jesus’ mediatorial role as both promiser of God’s kingdom power to those who believe and co-petitioner of those who suffer. The sick person of James may have "caused" their own sickness but now it is time for the community to let go of its culturally- and sinfully-induced illness of division and fighting—and of half-hearted faith and compromising with the world—and to embrace the needy one among them in fellowship and humility as Jesus would have them do. This will all take place through prayer, which has the promise of salvation attached to it through renewal by the word (1:21). Undergirding the command to pray and the promise of answer is the desire of God to grant healing and forgiveness to the individual and to the community through the risen presence of Christ so that it may endure trials and continue on to maturity and the crown of life (1:12). In the same way that Elijah looked to God and saw his petitions answered by the one who controls the heavens
and the earth, so also the readers of James should know that the "Father of lights" awaits their prayer and the inner change he requires so as to supply all their needs. The persistent—but important—question of whether healing is promised to each and every petitioner and, if not, whether sin has a part to play is not explicitly answered from this text. What is clear is that the presence of sin is a contributing factor to sickness and a blockage to prayers being answered (cf. 1 Pet 3:7; 1 Cor 11:30). Whether healing is prevented by sin is not stated. The Letter of James does, however, broaden out the notion of healing to include spiritual and social factors. The presence of the risen Lord is the agent of healing and reconciliation whenever it occurs, and the means of that healing is prayer prayed in dependent and righteous faith within a community that is at one with each other and with their risen Lord. It is possible that suffering is involved in this process as well, inferred by the theme of "trials" in 1:2–4 (cf. 1:12, 13–15), the illustration of righteous Elijah (5:17–18), and the motto that "the prayers of a righteous person accomplish much" (5:16b).

C. Conclusions from the Letter of James

The examination of the book of James has shown once again that the relationship between promise to and limitation upon petitionary prayer is individually expressed. To begin with, the prayer promises of James (1:5–6; 4:2–3; 5:13–18) form a regular sequence of context → request → condition → promise. This pattern is so consistent (even occurring in an unanswered prayer pattern) that it engenders the belief that it is the desire of the "Father of lights" to answer requests made of him in the midst of trials (1:2–4) as he brings about his "perfect work." God is straightforward, generous, merciful, dependable, and inviting of prayer (1:5, 17; 3:13–4:10; 5:13–20). There is no reason why he will not answer prayer. While this aspect was present in the unconditional prayer promises (Matt 7:9–11 par. Luke 11:11–13), in James it is explored throughout the book and balanced by God's desire for moral integrity in prayer.

Secondly, petition in the Letter of James is placed within the eschatological purpose of perfection, which is an integrated moral and salvational wholeness that embraces the individual, the community, and the cosmos. The key prayer in James, therefore, is for "wisdom" (1:5), not with respect to the mode or content of prayer but
with respect to the willingness to entrust oneself to the eschatological plan of salvation that is being accomplished through trials (including sin). The nuances of prayer within the "already–not yet" eschatological tension of the Synoptic Gospels are not present James. James' only mention of the word "kingdom," for example, is firmly future-oriented (2:5). It is not, however, that God's regenerating power is not at work here and now (e.g., 1:21), but that this is not conceived of in a way directly related to prayer. A second example of James' more rigid eschatological framework is his treatment of prayer in the midst of suffering (apart from suffering connected with one's sin), which seems to indicate that one should just petition God with expectation of being heard (5:13).

The third element that marks petitionary prayer in James is the explicit condition for a successful prayer for wisdom: "faith" that is willing to accept God's character and purpose. If the heart of the petitioner is casual, selfish, or insincere about the process of salvation outlined in 1:2–4, or dismissive of the community that God is bringing into his perfection, then nothing shall be received (1:6–8). Such a position is labelled "doubt" and results in "double-mindedness" and instability. This condition is probably related to the Synoptic prayer promises but shows movement away from them in a moral–motive direction. The "already–not yet" eschatological tension is experienced within the Christian and the community in James.

The fourth element that makes up petitionary prayer in James, and one closely linked to faith as a condition, is the spiritual health of the community as judged by its "wisdom" (3:13–18) and actions (4:1–3). The "prayer of faith" in 5:15, for example, is not a particular kind of prayer but prayer that accounts for the causes and effects of personal and/or community illness and reckons upon the presence of the risen Lord for fulfilment. The community condition was present in the Synoptic prayer promises as the requirement for forgiveness and in John as the command to love one another. In James, however, the community condition brings the prayer material of the book under its purpose and even its theology as a whole.

The mention of the risen "Lord" highlights a fifth, but less prominent element in James regarding the mediation of Christ in petitionary prayer. Where the mediation of Christ in petition was found to express the "already" of the kingdom of God in the Synoptic Gospels and was grounded in the exaltation of Jesus to the Father in the Farewell Discourse of John, in James no such theological underpinnings are evident; this important feature is left until the last prayer section of James and
mentioned almost casually (5:15; cf. 1:1; 2:1). The promise to petitionary prayer in James is grounded in the character of God and seeks the inner health of the individual and the community; it is not Christologically determined.
PART THREE: THE PAULINE CORPUS

VIII. PETITIONARY PRAYER IN PAUL

A. Introduction to Part Three

Within the New Testament, the relationship between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer is felt most keenly in the Synoptic Gospels. There the "already–not yet" eschatological tension integrates both aspects in ways that allow petitioners to be both completely confident of answer and yet fully aware that their (unanswered) prayer may (by God's Spirit) form part of God's greater kingdom purposes. Moreover, the mediation and example of Jesus in petition invites and enables its success. The previous two chapters have examined the prayer promises and restrictions found within the Gospel of John and the Letter of James, which employ prayer language and syntax similar to that found in the Synoptic Gospels. While similarities were found with the Synoptic material, the differences, particularly with respect to key element of the "already–not yet" eschatological tension, became more obvious. In John, the "already" is accentuated through the powerful mediation of the ascended Jesus, which now provides the ground, motive, and means of successful petition. In the Letter of James, the generous character of God affords confidence in prayer, but one that must be tempered with the "not yet" of the eschatological goal of perfection that presently requires the integrated nature of Christian existence (especially community harmony). As the study now considers the final witness to the tension between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer, the prayer material of the Pauline Corpus, echoes with expressions found in the Synoptic Gospels are very faint.¹ The prayer-promise format, for example,

¹ The Pauline Corpus uses prayer terms over 185 times and contains around 300 verses that mention or perform prayer functions. The following list has included all NT letters bearing Paul's name and includes not only words used for prayer actions (praise, petition, thanksgiving), but also words that infer these actions.

The question of the authenticity of the letters under Paul's name in the NT has minimal effect on this study, which attempts to grasp an overall understanding of Pauline prayer. Many studies of Pauline prayer have restricted themselves to the seven so-called "uncontested" letters (i.e., Rom, 1 Cor, 2 Cor, Gal, Phil, 1 Thess, and Phlm), e.g., Gebauer, Das Gebet; Monloubou, Prière; Wiles, Paul's Intercessory
Prayers. Most of the material critical for this part of the work will come from these letters. Some scholars of Pauline prayer have noted a remarkable similarity across the Pauline corpus as a whole with respect to prayer material, perhaps because the forms of prayer are more traditional; see, e.g., Cullmann, Prayer, 69; Longenecker, "Prayer in the Pauline Letters," 206. For these reasons it has been decided treat the Pauline Corpus in an indiscriminate way.

The key prayer terms and their occurrences in Paul are as follows: οἶνος ("to praise"; Rom 15:11); άπειρον ("to ask"; Eph 3:13, 20; Col 1:9); άρτιμα ("request"; Phil 4:6); άμήν (Rom 1:25; 9:5; 11:36; 15:33; 16:27; 1 Cor 14:16; 2 Cor 1:20; Gal 1:5; 6:18; Eph 3:21; Phil 4:20; 1 Thess 3:13; 1 Tim 1:17; 6:16; 2 Tim 4:18); άπαγγέλλειν ("to proclaim"; 1 Cor 14:25); δέσσαι ("to request, ask"; Rom 1:10; 1 Thess 3:10); δέησις ("request," "prayer"; Rom 10:1; 2 Cor 1:11; 9:14; Eph 6:18 [twice]; Phil 1:4, 19; 4:6; 1 Tim 2:1; 5:5; 2 Tim 1:3); δοξα ("glory"; Rom 4:20; 11:24; 14:17, 18; 2 Cor 1:11; Eph 1:16; 5:20; Phil 1:3; Col 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Thess 1:2; 2:13; 5:18; 2 Thess 1:3; 2:13; Philm 4); εὐαριστία ("thanksgiving"; 1 Cor 14:16; 2 Cor 4:15; 9:11, 12; Eph 5:4; Phil 4:6; Col 2:7; 4:2; 1 Thess 3:9; 1 Tim 2:1; 4:3; 4:4); εὐχάριστος ("thankful"; Col 3:15); εὐχεισθαί ("to wish," "to pray"; Rom 9:3; 2 Cor 13:7, 9); κράζειν ("to cry out"; Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6); μαράνα θά ("Come, Lord!" 1 Cor 16:22); λατρεύειν ("to worship," "to serve"; Rom 1:9, 25; Phil 3:3; 2 Tim 1:3); λατρεία ("worship," "service"; Rom 9:4; 12:1); προσεύχεσθαι ("to pray"; Rom 8:26; 1 Cor 11:4, 5, 13; 14:13, 14, 15 [twice]; Eph 6:18; Phil 1:9; Col 1:3, 9; 4:3; 1 Thess 5:17, 25; 1 Tim 2:8); προσευχή ("prayer"; Rom 1:10; 12:12; 15:30; 1 Cor 7:5; Eph 1:16; 6:18; Phil 4:6; Col 4:2, 12; 1 Thess 1:2; 1 Tim 2:1; 5:5; Philm 4); προσκυνεῖν ("to worship," "to bow down"; 1 Cor 14:25); ύπερεντυγχάνειν ("to intercede," "to plead"; Rom 8:26); χαίρειν ("to rejoice"; Rom 12:12; 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 1:18; 3:1; 4:10 [twice]; 1 Thess 3:9; 5:16); χαρά ("joy"; Rom 14:17; Phil 1:4; Col 1:11; 1 Thess 1:6; 3:9); and, χάρις ("thanks," "thankfulness"; Rom 6:17; 7:25a; 1 Cor 10:30; 15:57; 2 Cor 2:14; 8:16; 9:15; Col 3:16; 1 Tim 1:12; 2 Tim 1:3).

Thirteen different words are used for petition (άπειρον; άρτιμα; δέσσαι; δέησις; εὐσκαυέων; έντυγχάνειν; έντευξις; έπικαλείν; εὐχέσθαι; κράζειν; προσεύχεσθαι; προσευχή; ύπερεντυγχάνειν), four words for thanksgiving (εὐχάριστοι; εὐχάριστος; χάρις) and nine words for praise or worship (οἶνος; δοξα; δοξάζειν; εὐσκαυέσθαι; εὐλογεῖν; εὐλογητός; λατρεύειν; λατρεία; προσκυνεῖν). Apart from using prayer language in paraenesis (e.g., 1 Cor 11:4, 5), petition is exemplified, required, requested or reported by Paul on 49 occasions (78 verses). Including wish prayers and imprecations, petition accounts for 104 prayer occasions (118 verses) and prayer instructions or exhortations account for 29 mentions (32 verses). All praise items, including
appears only at Philippians 4:6–7, and the prayer-promise vocabulary is found only a few times in Paul.\(^2\) The verb αἰτεῖν ("to ask"), for example, is found only three times in prayer connections (Eph 3:13, 20; Col 1:9).\(^3\) However, the relative infrequency of prayer-promise syntax (and vocabulary) should not lead to the conclusion that the tension between promises to and conditions upon petitionary prayer does not exist in the Pauline material but that it must be approached conceptually within his way of praying.\(^4\) Paul’s letters record prayer in action. He prays for his readers,\(^5\) asks them to pray for him,\(^6\) and instructs them in how to pray.\(^7\) Occasionally, Paul addresses the nature of Christian petition (Rom 8:15–16, 26–27; Gal 4:6). Very occasionally, he speaks of his own petitions (2 Cor 12:8).

opening thanksgiving and benedictions (e.g., 2 Cor 1:3–6), doxologies (e.g., Rom 16:25–27), and hymns (e.g., Phil 2:5–11), make up 67 mentions in 119 verses. Of particular interest is the preponderance of thanksgivings and exhortations to thanksgiving in Paul (employing εὐχαριστεῖν, εὐχαριστία, εὐχάριστος, or, χάρις), which by comparison, far exceed any writer of the period, Christian or not.

To this list could also be added the following prayer terms or hints: (1) the "boasting" terminology (καυχᾶσθαι, κτα.; Phil 3:3); (2) the "gifts" of "tongues" in which, according to 1 Cor 14:2, a person does "not speak to other people but to God" (cf. 1 Cor 14:13–15, 16–17); (3) "making mention" [of someone in prayer] (μνείαν ποιεῖσθαι τινος; Rom 1:9; Eph 1:16; Phil 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2.; Philm 4); (4) "remembering" [in prayer] (μνημονεύειν; Col 4:18(?); 1 Thess 1:3; and, (5) "helping" verbs used by Paul in prayer contexts such as συναγωνίζεισθαι (Rom 15:30), συνοπωρεῖσθαι (2 Cor 1:11). Petition may also be presumed in the gift of "faith" (12:9; cf. 13:2) and "miracles" (12:10, 28, 29).

Comparison of the above lists with those found in Wiles, Paul’s Intercessory Prayers, 297–298, and Longenecker, "Prayer in the Pauline Letters," 203–204, will show discrepancies due to definition and the extent of the Pauline hand. The above analysis is primarily intended to show the size and scope of Pauline prayer material rather than be a definitive list of Pauline prayer material.


\(^3\) The related noun αἰτήμα is used by Paul in his only prayer promise (Phil 4:6; found only once more in the NT for a prayer request, 1 John 5:15).

\(^4\) A few scholars have explored the tension between promises to and restrictions upon petition in Paul, but not in a dedicated way. See comments in: Cullmann, Prayer, 69–88, and Crump, Petitionary Prayer, 197–251.


\(^6\) Rom 15:30–32; 2 Cor 1:11(?); Phil 1:19; Eph 6:19, 20; Col 4:3, 4; 2 Thess 3:1–2.

\(^7\) Rom 12:12c, 14; 1 Cor 14:13; Eph 5:4b, 20; 6:18; Phil 2:18; 3:1a; 4:4, 6–7; Col 2:7; 3:15c, 16c, 17c; 4:2; 1 Thess 5:16, 17, 18; 1 Tim 2:1–2, 8.
In all of this prayer material it is evident that Paul offers prayer with the expectation of answer—leaving to one side how that "answer" is conceived. One need look no further than his thanksgiving periods for evidence that God answered his prayers (e.g., 1 Cor 1:4–7; Phil 1:3–5; Col 1:3–5; 1 Thess 1:2–5; 2:13; etc.). And yet, Paul was (painfully) aware that not all petitions are answered in the fashion of their intent (e.g., 2 Cor 12:8). Although Paul was confident in prayer, he did not always pray with certainty of outcome (e.g., Rom 15:30–32). He appears aware of the limitation of God's will in achieving prayer outcomes (e.g., Rom 1:10; 8:26–27; 15:32; Col 4:12bc), although he seems to configure this concept within a Christological framework (see the next chapter). In brief, Paul's letters are records of how he exercised prayer within his apostolic ministry and how he encouraged others to join him in prayer. For this reason, any study of a particular aspect of Pauline prayer—such as petition—must account for its existence within his apostolic ministry.

Prayer in the Pauline Corpus is a well-trodden path in scholarship and a significant number of very worthwhile studies on Pauline prayer (or aspects of it) already exist. It is not intended to repeat that scholarship here, but rather to lay out those elements of Pauline prayer that will help establish the framework of his view of petitionary prayer together with its promises and limitations where they are found. In pursuit of this aim, particular attention will be given to: (1) the impact of his conversion upon his understanding of prayer; (2) the urgency of petition in the present era; (3) his only explicit prayer promise (Phil 4:6–7); (4) his persistent

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8 A full-length examination of all Pauline prayer material has not appeared for some time. Bibliography to 1994 may be found in: Harding, "Bibliography," 213–226. Notable contributions include: W. Bieder, "Gebetswirklichkeit und Gebetsmöglichkeit bei Paulus: Das Beten des Geistes und das Beten im Geiste," TZ 4 (1948): 22–40; Cullmann, Prayer, 69–88; R. Deichgräber, Gotteshymnus und Christushymnus in der frühen Christenheit (SUNT 5; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1967); Gebauer, Das Gebet; Harder, Das Gebet; Longenecker, 2001 #2223@ 303–227; Monloubou, Prière; O’Brien, Introductory Thanksgivings; Ernst Orphal, Das Paulusgebet: Psychologisch-exegetische Untersuchung des Paulus-Gebetslebens auf Grund seiner Selbstzeugnisse (Gotha: Leopold Klotz, 1933); Carolyn Osiek, "Paul's Prayer: Relationship with Christ?," in Scripture and Prayer: A Celebration for Caroll Stuhlmueller (ed. Carolyn Osiek and Donald Senior; Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1988), 145–157; David W. Pao, Thanksgiving: An Investigation of a Pauline Theme (NSBT 13; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002); Schubert, Form and Function; Stanley, Boasting; Stendahl, Meanings, 151–161; Wiles, Paul's Intercessory Prayers.
emphasis on thanksgiving; and, (5) the role of the Spirit in prayer. Each of these items is, once again, a major area of Pauline study, and a light hand is required to prevent this chapter from ballooning out of proportion. The main aim here is to discover what petition meant to Paul, what enhanced it and what limited it.

Following the overview of Pauline prayer in this chapter, the next two chapters (IX, X) will examine two texts that have been considered by some scholars to place strong limitations on Pauline petition. The first is Romans 8:26–27, which to some implies that since the Spirit guides Christian prayer towards God's will petitionary prayer is effectively limited to this outcome. The second text, 2 Corinthians 12:7–10, records Paul's only clear petitionary prayer for himself in his corpus. After three unsuccessful petitions that a "thorn in the flesh" be removed from him (v. 8), he says that the Lord spoke to him in a revelation that "my grace is sufficient" (v. 9). It has been argued by some that the sequence of non-answer followed by revelation means that Paul realised petitioning for his own needs was secondary to achieving his apostolic commission in Christ's strength and in Christ's way, and that this "way" was primarily found in suffering and not in the fulfilment of his own needs. This may indeed explain the paucity of petitions for self in Paul. Chapter X will not only examine this text but also present other evidence that suggests Paul did pray for his own needs. A brief final chapter (XI) will synthesise the results of the investigation of the relationship between the promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer in the Pauline Corpus, highlighting Paul's distinctive contribution.

B. An Overview of Pauline Prayer

1. Jesus as Lord
Paul's continuity with the prayer themes and practices of biblical and Second Temple Judaism is correctly recognised by many scholars, yet his particular prayer accents must also be traced to the revelation of the "Son [of God]" to him on the Damascus

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Road (cf. Gal 1:15–16; 1 Cor 15:8; Phil 3:12). From that time onwards, Paul regarded the exalted Jesus as the one to whom worship was now due and in whom life and forgiveness may be found (e.g., Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 1:2; 12:3; Phil 2:11; 1 Thess 3:11). The Almighty was now to be addressed as the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (e.g., 2 Cor 1:3), thanks to God was now to be rendered through

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10 Whether Paul's Damascus Road experience should be considered as a conversion or a call continues to be discussed in the literature. For survey articles on the question see Bruce Corley, "Interpreting Paul's Conversion—Then and Now," in _The Road from Damascus: The Impact of Paul's Conversion on His Life, Thought, and Ministry_ (MNTS; ed. Richard N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 1–17; Janet Meyer Everts, "Conversion and Call of Paul," _DPL_: 156–163.

11 After the Damascus Road experience, Paul says he could no longer view Christ from a "fleshly" perspective (2 Cor 5:16), but only in an intensely personal way, as the one who "loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20c; cf. 4:19; 2 Cor 4:6; Phil 3:7–16); see Richard N. Longenecker, "A Realized Hope, a New Commitment, and a Developed Proclamation: Paul and Jesus," in _The Road from Damascus: The Impact of Paul's Conversion on His Life, Thought, and Ministry_ (MNTS; ed. Richard N. Longenecker; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 30–32; Udo Schnelle, _Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology_ (trans. M. Eugene Boring; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003), 97–102. Paul's intense awareness of the love of Christ created a love for and obedience to Christ that directed his mission and his ministry (1 Cor 2:2; 11:1; Gal 4:19; Eph 4:15; Phil 1:27; 2:5; 3:14–15, 20–21; Col 1:28–29) and from which his prayers resulted. Paul's practice of appealing directly to the Lord in prayer (2 Cor 12:8; cf. 1 Cor 16:22b) may also be traced back to the Damascus Road. However, Paul did not see praying to Jesus and to the Father as interchangeable; cf. Cullmann, _Prayer_, 86–87, and the classic treatment by A. Klawek, _Das Gebet zu Jesus: Seine Berechtigung und Übung nach den Schriften des Neuen Testaments_ (NTabh 6.5; Münster: Aschendorffschen, 1921), 62–82. Paul's prayer to Jesus in 2 Cor 12:8 will be given more detailed coverage in ch. X below.

12 Wiles, _Paul's Intercessory Prayers_, 55. In his prayer reports, Paul mostly addresses the divine being as "God" (Θεός)—though the title "Father" (πατήρ) should always be presupposed (cf. Gal 1:3; Phil 4:20; 2 Cor 1:3). To this simple address Paul adds various appellations. The possessive pronoun is sometimes added (e.g., "my God" Rom 1:8; 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:3; 4:19), reinforcing the intimate nature of his relationship with the divine being (see section 4 below). Other appellations are more extensive. In the wish prayers of Romans 15, for example, Paul asks that "the God of steadfastness and encouragement" (Rom 15:5), "the God of hope" (Rom 15:13), and "the God of peace" (Rom 15:33) benefit the readers in context-appropriate ways (cf. Phil 4:9; 1 Thess 5:23; and, "the God of love and peace" in 2 Cor 13:11). In 2 Cor 1:3, he blesses the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" and proceeds to fill this out in the following verses (and indeed throughout the book as a whole). These appellations all speak of God as reliable, generous, and intimately engaged with his people, working—by his grace and Spirit—in and through them for their good and the fulfilment of his purposes (2 Thess 1:11). The way Paul addresses God in prayer reflects the way that he speaks of him throughout all his letters. For Paul, God is generous and giving (Rom 12:3; 1 Cor 1:3; 12:6, 18; 1 Thess 3:9), even giving of his
and for Jesus Christ (e.g., Rom 7:25; 2 Cor 9:15; Eph 5:20), and requests were now to be made in Jesus' name (e.g., 2 Cor 1:20).

With the revelation of Jesus as Messiah on the Damascus Road, Paul became aware of an eschatological imperative. The expectation of the imminent arrival of the kingdom within Second Temple Judaism has already been discussed in earlier chapters, but Paul experienced this in some as sense having already arrived. As Wiles expresses it, Paul's ministry as Christ's apostle "gained new depth and urgency as he saw himself as an eschatological figure with a high or nearly unique position in the divine plan." Paul sensed the nearness of the "day" of the Lord, and therefore made every effort to present his churches and himself to Christ on that "day." Prayer played a crucial role in the fulfilment of this aspiration (Rom 15:6[?]; 1 Cor 1:8; Phil 1:6, 10; 4:5–7[?]; 1 Thess 3:13; 5:23) as Paul longed for his churches to live lives "worthy of the Lord" (Phil 1:27; 2 Cor 1:14; 5:9–10; Col 1:10; esp. 1 Thess 2:12; 2 Thess 1:11). It is with a constant eye on the Parousia that Paul asks God that his churches may grow in their understanding of God and his ways so that their love and endurance will bear the fruit of righteousness for the Lord (e.g., Rom 15:6, 13; Phil 1:9–11; Col 1:9–10; 1 Thess 3:12–13; 5:23; 2 Thess 1:11–12; 2:17; Phlm 6).15

Spirit (e.g., Rom 5:5; 8:15, 231 Cor 2:12; 2 Cor 1:21; 5:5). God is welcoming (Rom 14:3), faithful (1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor 1:18–20; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3), sovereign over all events (Rom 10:15:32; 1 Cor 1:1; 16:12; 2 Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Phil 1:22; Col 1:1, 25; 1 Thess 1:3–4; 3:10; 2 Thess 2:13), and purposefully at work within his people to bring about his salvation plan (Phil 1:5–6; 2:12–13; 4:6–7, 13, 19–20; 2 Cor 9:8; Eph 3:20). Regarding his salvation plan, Paul says that God is loving (Rom 5:8; 8:39; 2 Cor 13:13), gracious (Rom 3:24; 5:15; Gal 1:15), and merciful (Phil 2:27; Eph 2:4; 4:32; Col 1:27), justifying all who believe (Rom 3:30; 4:6; 8:33), whom he has also predestined for salvation (Rom 8:29, 30). This generous and good nature of God remains true even when suffering is experienced (Rom 5:3–5; 2 Cor 11:23–12:10; Phil 1:19–30); cf. Donald Guthrie and Ralph P. Martin, "God." DPL: 362–363. Since God has "given" believers his Son, will he not also give them all things with him (Rom 8:32)? This same God works "all things together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose" (Rom 8:28). Indeed, in Christ, God is bringing all things together (15:27–28; Eph 1:10, 11, 22, 23; Col 1:20). In other words, the "all things" God has purposed for his people are inseparable from the eschatological goal of his purpose in Christ. In the exegesis of Phil 4:6–7 in section 3 below, it will be argued that Paul connects the eschatological goal of the Father with the daily life of the believer in dependent petition.13 James D. G. Dunn, The Theology of Paul the Apostle (Grand Rapids, Mich./Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 1997), 317–333.

14 Wiles, Paul's Intercessory Prayers, 49.

In short, for Paul, the Lord Jesus Christ was now at the heart of all prayer because he revealed the heart of God and lay at the heart of God's purposes for his people and his creation. Prayer was now not less but more necessary. Christ was now a mediator for the people of God, interceding for them before the Father (Rom 8:34), giving them confidence that they are heard by the Father and will never be separated from his love in Christ (8:38–39). Prayers offered in Christ's name were sure of answer by God because the believer who offered them was already present with Christ and Christ with them (Phil 3:20; 4:6–7).

2. Petition in the Present Distress
In his desire and prayer for his churches that "Christ be formed in them" (Gal 4:19), Paul stressed the opposition of spiritual forces and trying events against the Christian (esp. θλιψί; Rom 5:3; 8:35; 12:12; 2 Cor 1:4; 8:2; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:14; 3:3; 2 Thess 1:4, 6, 7). He did not see this distress as accidental, but as an inevitable part of belonging to Christ. The Christian's sufferings are really Christ's sufferings, or at least a continuation of his sufferings (Col 1:24; 2 Cor 1:6; 4:8). As Paul reminds the believers in Rome, "[If we are children of God, then we are] heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him" (Rom 8:17, NRSV; cf. Phil 3:10).

The distress of which Paul speaks has a particular quality. It is an "eschatological tribulation" that belongs to the time in which the "afflictions of the last time [break] into the present." Although the Pauline Corpus refers to this eschatological denouement sparingly (e.g., 1 Cor 7:24, 28; 10:11), it is clearly presumed in many places (e.g., Rom 13:11–14; 1 Cor 15:25; Gal 1:4; 4:4; Eph 5:16; England/Downers Grove, Ill.: Apollos, 2000), 185–204, reflects upon Paul's desire to bring about maturity among the churches.

16 He himself was no stranger to distress and opposition, e.g., 2 Cor 1:6, 8; 4:6, 8, 17; 6:4; 7:4; Eph 3:13; Phil 1:17; 4:14; Col 1:24; 1 Thess 3:4.
18 Allison, End of the Ages, 66.
19 Schlier, "Θλίψι, Θλιψί," 144.
20 Schlier, "Θλίψι, Θλιψί," 145. Philip F. Esler, Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003), 249–260, argues that the "already–not yet" tension does not imply dissociation in salvation history but continuity. While this point should be granted, the co-existence of both the future blessings and the present distress in a heightened way cannot be denied.
6:13b; Col 1:13; 2 Thess 2:3–10), and may be inferred from his regular encouragement to and prayer for "endurance" in the midst of distress (ὕστομωνή, Rom 5:3, 4; 8:25; 2 Cor 1:6; 6:4; Col 1:11; 1 Thess 1:3; 2 Thess 1:4; 3:5; ὑπομένετω, Rom 12:12).

As Paul understands it, Christians now face a spiritual foe, Satan, of whom they must be aware (1 Cor 7:5; 2 Cor 2:11; 11:14; 12:7; 1 Thess 2:18; cf. esp. Eph 6:10–13). In Paul's mind, Satan's final demise is certain (Rom 16:20a), but his full fury is yet to be unleashed (2 Thess 2:9). In the meantime, Christians are called to resist sin, the world, and the devil. Resistance is not an occasional event in the Christian life, but a constant mode. Paul says that he struggles (ἀγωνίζεσθαι; ἀγών), both in his own ministry (1 Cor 9:24–27; 1 Thess 2:2) and for the maturity of his churches (Phil 1:27–30; [3:12–14]; Col 1:28–2:3; cf. Col 4:12b). He also encourages his churches not only to join him in his contest (Rom 15:30), but also to engage in their own struggle with their spiritual enemies, which is a sign of their salvation (Phil 1:27–30).

For Paul, prayer plays a major part in this "struggle." This is especially seen in the well-known climax to Ephesians (6:10–20). The readers are instructed to "be

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22 Cf. Rom 8:17; Phil 1:29; 1 Thess 2:14; 2 Thess 1:5 (verb); 2 Cor 1:5, 6, 7; Phil 3:10; Col 1:24 (noun), and, B. Gärtner, "Suffer," _NIDNTT_ 3: 725–726.

23 See the discussion of the spiritual nature of these enemies, headed up by Satan himself, in Peter T. O'Brien, _The Letter to the Ephesians_ (PNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich./Leicester: Eerdmans/Apollos, 1999), 256–270, and the references there.

24 Robert Jewett, _Romans: A Commentary_ (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 986–988, considers Rom 16:17–20a to be a "non-Pauline interpolation." However, v. 20a is not out of order given: (1) other Pauline texts that look to the sudden appearance of Jesus (e.g., 1 Cor 16:22); (2) the supreme confidence Paul has in protection from every enemy (e.g., Rom 8:38–39); and, (3) the fact that the "powers" have already been captured at the cross of Christ and are on display, presumably awaiting final verdict (Col 2:15); cf. Douglas J. Moo, _The Epistle to the Romans_ (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996), 933: "[T]he promise of victory over Satan […] extends] to the final eschatological victory of God's people when Satan is thrown into the 'lake of fire.'" Wiles, _Paul's Intercessory Prayers_, 91–97, tentatively argues for Rom 16:20a being read as a wish prayer.

25 To this may be added Paul's military language for his own ministry and that of his co-workers: 1 Cor 15:32; 2 Cor 6:6; 10:3–5; Phil 2:25; Phlm 2.

26 Representative detailed discussion of the authorship of Ephesians (with bibliography) can be found in Ernest Best, _A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians_ (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 6–36 ("Many of the objections to
empowered in the Lord and the strength of his might" (Eph 6:10), which is then explained as "standing," that is, standing firm against the opposition of the powers (vv. 11, 13, 14; cf. Rom 5:2; 14:4; 1 Cor 15:1; 16:12; Gal 5:1; Phil 1:27; 4:1; Col 4:12; 1 Thess 3:8; 2 Thess 2:15).

To fulfill this exhortation to stand firm, the readers of Ephesians are called to take up the "armour of God" (πανοπλία του θεοῦ, Eph 6:11, 13) against the "schemes" of devil (6:11, 13) because, "our struggle is not against blood and flesh, but against the rulers, authorities, the world rulers of this darkness, and evil spiritual beings in the heavenly places" (6:12).

Six items of weaponry are carefully set out (vv. 14–17) with petitionary prayer providing the conclusion in verse 18. Prayer is probably not meant to be seen as the final weapon against the powers, since no armour analogy is provided for it, unlike the previous six items of weaponry. Rather, prayer is the instrument through which the whole arsenal will be effectively put into action.

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27 Cullmann, Prayer, 88.
29 Stanley, Boasting, 110–113, questions whether prayer should be considered as a "struggle" or not, concluding that, Paul does not conceive prayer as a struggle, but as one means among others of taking part in the "contest" of the faith and the gospel. (113)
30 Best, Ephesians, 604; Hoehner, Ephesians, 854.
deployed in the struggle against the authorities and powers. Lincoln correctly notes that there is a "constant need for calling on divine aid" in prayer throughout Ephesians that finds its climax here. Essential in the struggle against the powers is not only the persistent deployment of petitionary prayer, but also the attitude in which petition is exercised, that is, "keeping alert" (Eph 6:18, ἐγροπνοῦντες; cf. Luke 21:36; 1 Peter 4:7). Like Colossians 4:2–3, the exhortation in Ephesians 6:18 targets the danger of falling asleep in the present age of "darkness."

The need for vigilant prayer is reflected in Paul's injunctions to persevere in or be devoted to prayer (Rom 12:12; Eph 6:18–19; Col 4:2–3; 1 Thess 5:17; cf. 2 Thess 3:1–2; Luke 18:1; Acts 1:14; 2:42; 6:4). One also wonders whether Paul's own "unceasing" prayers for his churches (Rom 1:10; 1 Thess 3:10; 2 Thess 1:11) arise from his concern that believers remain alert as they await the Parousia of Christ. Paul's main concern is that Christians and churches do not drift into unbelief through either distress or spiritual malaise. Prayer is an exercise of faith that stimulates the believer to activate that which is being threatened. Like Jesus, Paul sensed the nearness of the End, and like his Lord, prayer became the pathway through distress.


In a different key from the previous section, but within the same eschatological framework, Philippians 4:6–7 states that any trouble in life may be confidently brought to God:

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to

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31 So, e.g., Arnold, Power and Magic, 112; Best, Ephesians, 604; and, Andrew T. Lincoln, Ephesians (WBC 42; Dallas, Tex.: Word, 1990), 451–452.
32 Lincoln, Ephesians, 452. So also Arnold, Power and Magic, 112, who notes how Eph 6:18 builds upon two earlier prayer reports that focussed on the power of God demonstrated in Christ, which is now available to the readers to enable them to grasp the hope of their calling, their love of others, and ultimately God's immeasurable love for them (1:15–23; 3:14–21). Paul has demonstrated to the readers how he is praying for them and for his work, and now calls upon them to continue this work, including praying for him (v. 19).
33 See discussion of keeping alert in the midst of temptation in Lövestam, Spiritual Wakefulness, 64–77.
34 Cf. Rom 13:11–14; 1 Cor 16:13–14; Eph 5:6–14; 6:12, 18; 1 Thess 5:4–11; cf. 1 Peter 5:8–9; Rev 3:2–4; Mark 13:33, 34, 37; 14:34, 38 and par.; Heb 5:7, 8. See ch. IV.B.1.b above for material on "sleeping" as a sign of spiritual danger.
God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (NRSV)

Things troubling the Philippian Christians may have included: the future of their imprisoned apostle (1:12–14), persecution from their opponents (1:28–29; 3:18), internal disunity (2:2–4; 4:2–3), the provision of daily needs (4:13, 19), and the threatening nature of their surrounding society (2:14–15; cf. 1:27; 3:20, including the might of Rome and its "lord" reflected in the colony of Philippi). Verse 6 is intended to reach into the most mundane areas of the readers' lives. The imperatives are both all-exclusive ("worry about nothing," μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε) and all-inclusive ("make known everything to God," ἐν παντὶ […] γνωρίζεσθω) to ensure its reach. Paul is probably not "shooting in the dark" in this prayer instruction, but has the audience's present and future spiritual trials in mind (cf. 1:29, which belongs to the main imperative of the letter, 1:27–30). As they follow their apostle, they (continue to) join him (1:5) in his struggle for and defence of the gospel of Christ (1:13–14, 16). In acting upon the prayer promise of Philippians 4:6, they will be guarded in Jesus Christ (cf. 1:1, 26; 2:5; 3:3, 14; 4:19, 21) by "the peace of God that passes all understanding" (4:7). It is in the midst of all the trials and difficulties of life, therefore, that the Philippian Christians are exhorted to hand over everything to God, assured of God's own peace in the battle. This peace is not primarily a passive feeling of calm, but an active protection of their whole self.

As noted in the introduction to this chapter, Philippians 4:6–7 is the only explicit prayer promise found in the Pauline Corpus. Although it lacks the typical language of other New Testament prayer promises, it has the common command–condition–promise structure (e.g., Matt 7:7–8 par. Luke 11:9–10; Mark 11:24 par. Matt 21:22; John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24, 26; Jas 1:5; 4:2–3; 5:13–18; 1 John 3:22; 5:14–15). Although "faith" is not mentioned as a condition by name (cf. Mark 11:22–24 par. Matt 21:21–22; John 14:12–14; Jas 1:5), it could not be described more fittingly than it is here in Philippians 4:6. The Philippian are commanded to eschew every anxiety and commit every concern to God if the promise to prayer is to

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37 For discussion, see O'Brien, Philippians, 491–494.
be successful (cf. 1 Pet 5:7; Matt 6:25–34). Not to hand every concern over to God in prayer will presumably leave their emotions and thoughts ever open to anxiety, which has unbelief as its ultimate consequence (cf. James 1:5–6). \(^{38}\) Once again, Paul's ultimate concern for his churches is that their faith will endure in spite of the onslaught of spiritual opposition, great or small (cf. Phil 1:27).

Unlike many other New Testament prayer promises, Philippians 4:6–7 does not state that petitioners will receive whatever they ask for (compare Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 13:9–13; John 14:13–14; 15:7, 16; 15:23). It is not that Paul does not believe God will supply all their needs (see, Phil 4:13, 19). Rather, it is that he wants the readers to appreciate the goal of petitionary prayer: that God protects his people from spiritual harm. God supplies them with what is more valuable as they trust him for what is less valuable. This distinction between an immediate and an ultimate answer to prayer is also found in the Synoptic prayer promises: the Father desires to give "good things" (or, as Luke would have it, "the Holy Spirit") to those who ask him for daily needs (cf. Matt 7:11 par. Luke 11:13). Paul, like Jesus, reminds readers that God is a generous and kind Father to his children for the sake of his Son and that his provision of their "every need" comes from his "glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:19; Rom 8:32; 2 Cor 9:8). Daily needs are not diminished in this prayer promise since through them the protection of the "peace of God" is promised (Phil 4:7). A second, and more subtle, condition of the promise in Philippians 4:6–7 is that thanks must be given to God alongside the petition. This raises a distinct aspect of Pauline prayer that merits a section of its own.

4. The Priority of Thanksgiving
One element easily passed over in Philippians 4:6–7 is Paul's inclusion of "thanksgiving" (εὐχαριστία) as a condition within the prayer promise (cf. Col 4:2; 3:15, 17; Eph 5:4, 20; 1 Thess 5:16–18). \(^{39}\) By this instruction Paul does not intend

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\(^{38}\) Hawthorne and Martin, *Philippians*, 247–248

\(^{39}\) The centrality of thanksgiving for the apostle is evident not only from the frequency of the use of the εὐχαριστία- and related stems but also from the adverbial qualifiers that he uses alongside these. Paul says he "always" (πάντοτε, 1 Cor 1:4; Phil 1:4; Col 1:3; 1 Thess 1:2; 2 Thess 1:3; 2:13; Phlm 4) or "never ceases" (οὐ παύομα, Eph 1:16; ἀδιαλείπτως, 1 Thess 1:2; 2:13) to thank God, and he offers thanksgiving out of a "fullness of joy before our God because of you" (1 Thess 3:9). The theme's importance is well-established in scholarly discussion. O'Brien, *Introductory Thanksgivings*, 4–15, reviews prior scholarship. Apart from this
the readers to give thanks in advance for what they are about to petition God (cf. Mark 11:24), but rather that they foster an attitude of thanksgiving in light of the many benefits obtained "in Christ Jesus" (cf. Rom 1:8; 7:25a; 1 Cor 1:4; 15:57; 2 Cor 2:14; 4:13–15; 9:15 [cf. 8:9]). For Paul, thanksgiving is inseparable from petitionary prayer. As Wiles says, they combine

[... an underlying sense of a double situation that [Paul] does not always express in so many words—a situation in which victories are continually associated with new occasions of need.]

Wiles adds that in this "eschatological era, with its overlapping 'inaugurated' and 'futurist' aspects," thanksgiving "must be augmented by petition and intercession." This necessity, says Wiles, accounts for the "paradoxical" quality of Pauline thanksgiving in which, "[e]ven the negative aspects of the eschatological age [i.e., persecution] have their positive value," and become objects of thanksgiving (e.g., 1 Thess 5:18, see below).

Thanksgiving (and praise, for that matter) does not spell the end of petition, as some suppose. Thanksgiving is offered in the here and now, when daily battles are won through the working of God's resurrection power (cf. Eph 1:16–23). But the war is not yet over. Thanksgiving enters into the spiritual battlefield with petition at its side (e.g., Eph 5:15–20; 6:18–20; Phil 4:5–7; Col 4:2), ready for the next conflict, and petition always has thanksgiving (or rejoicing, Phil 1:18b–19) as its ultimate goal. Christians are called to rejoice (or, give thanks) in any and every circumstance...
(2 Cor 1:10–11; 2:14; 4:15; 9:11–15; Phil 1:18; 2:17–18; 3:1; 4:4, 10; 1 Thess 5:18), and every prayer ends with the Amen, which is an anticipation of God's provision and anticipates giving him the glory (cf. 2 Cor 1:20). This note of praise raises the most significant element of Pauline prayer, the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17; 15:13). The remainder of this chapter and the whole of the next will be devoted to this central and distinctive aspect of Pauline prayer.

5. The Spirit and Prayer

Paul connects the Spirit (or, "power") of God to prayer over a dozen times in his letters:

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God […] (Rom 8:15–16)

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44 Wiles, *Paul's Intercessory Prayers*, 170: "Every intercession could end with the 'Amen' which expressed the unshakeable faithfulness of God […] (1 Thess 5:24)."


47 Taken from the NRSV, emphasis added. See also Rom 5:5; 15:13; 1 Cor 14:2, 14–17; 2 Cor 3:16–18; 13:13; Eph 2:18; 3:16; 5:18–20; 1 Thess 5:16–18.
Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Rom 8:26–27)

And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (Gal 4:6)

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. (Eph 6:18)

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance. (Phil 1:18b–19)

Three times I appealed to the Lord about this, that it would leave me, but he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. (2 Cor 12:8–10)

Two apparently opposite emphases emerge in these texts: (1) success or confidence in prayer in the face of opposition (e.g., Rom 8:15–16; Gal 4:6; Eph 6:18; Phil 1:18–19; 2 Cor 1:8–11); and, (2) apparent failure in prayer in the face of "weakness" (Rom 8:26, 27; 2 Cor 12:8–10). These opposites reflect the tension between confidence and frustration in prayer that lies at the heart of this study as a whole. What is significant about these texts is that the Spirit appears to be at work in both the promises and the limitations!

Once again, it is not proposed to investigate here the relationship of prayer and the Spirit in detail, but to outline the main features of this relationship. By general consensus, Romans 8:14–16 and Galatians 4:6 are foundational to a proper understanding of prayer in Paul.  

Although the passages occur in separate letters and in differing contexts they are strikingly similar to each other. These similarities point to a deeply embedded understanding of prayer for Paul—as well as for the

48 For example, Cullmann, Prayer, 72–73.
churches founded by him (e.g., in Galatia) and not founded by him (e.g., in Rome).\textsuperscript{49}

It is this underlying view of prayer in Paul that this section seeks to uncover.\textsuperscript{50}

*Galatians 4:6* is the earlier of the two texts and comes at the close of Paul's argument in that letter (2:15–4:7). In brief, Paul argues that justification comes about not by "works of the Law" but by "faith in Christ."\textsuperscript{51} *Galatians 4:1–7* recapitulates the final points of this argument, concluding that the sending of the "Son" inaugurates the era of freedom from slavery, that is, of being released from "guardians" (such as the Law). The Spirit (like the Son) was sent, "so that we might receive adoption as children" (v. 5b, NRSV; ἵνα τὴν ζυγοθήσιαν ἀπολάβωμεν).\textsuperscript{52}

This adoption (or "sonship")\textsuperscript{53} was sealed by the sending of the Spirit into the believer's heart, crying, "Abba Father!" The *Abba* cry, although attributed to the Spirit, is most likely an *audible* testimony made by the believer in prayer rather than

\textsuperscript{49} Moo, *Romans*, 497 n. 5, details the many parallels between Gal 4:3b–7 and Rom 8:2–17, concluding that it shows Paul's "common preaching or teaching pattern" (498).

\textsuperscript{50} Rom 8:26–27 and 2 Cor 12:8–10 have already been identified as key texts in this discussion and will be looked at in the following two chapters. Ephesians 6:18 was briefly covered in section 2 above, and Phil 1:18b–19 was mentioned in the last section; it will also be touched upon in ch. X.

\textsuperscript{51} The question of whether διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ means "faith in Jesus Christ" (objective genitive) or "faith of Jesus Christ" (subjective genitive) is not easily resolved and not critical for this section or the thesis as a whole. However, it appears that within the whole argument of Gal 2:16–4:7, the contrast is between "doing the works of the Law" and "believing in Christ/the Son of God/what you heard," leaning the decision toward the objective genitive. For further argument, see Dunn, *Theology of Paul*, 379–385.

\textsuperscript{52} Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 406–408, correctly notes that Paul is operating with a clear "salvation–historical" framework here. This is why he uses the same verb for the divine origin of the Son and the Spirit (vv. 4, 6, ἐξαποστέλλατεν). Sonship was effected by the Son on the cross, but applied (and experienced) by means of the Spirit at the moment of conversion. Paul want to use this event as proof of their sonship. Ben Witherington, III, *Grace in Galatia: A Commentary on St Paul's Letter to the Galatians* (Grand Rapids, Mich./Edinburgh: Eerdmans/T. & T. Clark, 1998), 290–291, supports this analysis, noting that Paul speaks about "coincidental" events that are part of the Spirit's work of forming Christ in the believer. Thus Paul's statements about adoption are not only about status but character.

\textsuperscript{53} Ἰυιθεσία is capable of either Greco-Roman and Jewish (cf. Rom 9:4) accents but Paul appears to be combining these here and in Romans. See discussion in Jewett, *Romans*, 498.
an inaudible "heavenly" witness of the Spirit.\(^{54}\) If the cry is made "in our hearts," that is, in the core of the human self that relates with the divine being (cf. Rom 5:5; 8:26–27; 1 Cor 6:19; 2 Cor 1:20–21; 1 Thess 4:8), then it is most probably part of the believer's experience, although this experience is not easily defined in Paul.\(^{55}\) Paul does not explore in depth the nature and ongoing function of this \textit{Abba} cry in Galatians, but he does in Romans 8:14–16.

\textit{Romans 8:14–16} comes at the close of an argument to defend the thesis statement of 8:1 that there is "now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (cf. vv. 31–35).\(^{56}\) Having indicated that the Christ event has freed the readers from the old realms of sin and death (and the Law) in Romans 5:12–7:25, Paul, in 8:1–17, explains how this freedom—realised by the Spirit—may now be exercised. Not only do believers enjoy freedom (v. 2) and a new existence (v. 5) by the Spirit, they are able to continually put to death the works of the flesh (vv. 12–13) by the same Spirit. Since they are led by the Spirit, Paul says, they should demonstrate that

\(^{54}\) Cullmann, \textit{Prayer}, 73. See ch. IX below for further exploration of the "heart" in Pauline prayer.

\(^{55}\) Bieder, "Gebetswirklichkeit," 28–29. The Torah and the Prophets said that it was God's desire that his people worship him with the "heart." God has always desired his people to be faithfully obedient to him (Ezek 36:26–27; Jer 31:31–34). This may be behind Paul's use of the word heart here in Galatians; see J. Louis Martyn, \textit{Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary} (AB 33A; New York: Doubleday, 1997), 391–392. In Rom 8:16 Paul uses the word πνεῦμα when speaking about the "location" where the Spirit "cries." This word also has echoes in the same OT passages and the likelihood of Paul's intentional allusion is high.

\(^{56}\) Jewett, \textit{Romans}, 476–479; and, Fee, \textit{God's Empowering Presence}, 517, 521. Rom 8:1 itself reaches back to 7:6b where Paul first states his view that freedom from the law enables Christians to serve "in the newness of the Spirit" and not the "oldness of the letter." Rom 7:7–25 treat objections to the second part of this summary statement and now Paul returns to the first part—serving in newness of the Spirit—a subject also delved into in 6:1–7:6, without referring to the Spirit as such. See Jewett, \textit{Romans}, 479; Moo, \textit{Romans}, 420–422. The foundation argument in Rom 8:2–4 is that the "law of the Spirit of life set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (v. 2; cf. 2 Cor 3:17). In the Christ event ("sent," v. 3; Jewett, \textit{Romans}, 482; Moo, \textit{Romans}, 478–479), God inaugurated the age to come ("now," v. 1) when he "condemned sin that was in the flesh," so that "the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in those [...] who walk according to the Spirit" (v. 4). The latter group exist apart from the flesh since they are indwelt by the Spirit of Christ and one day their bodies will be renewed by this indwelling Spirit (vv. 9–11). In the present, therefore, they are to have nothing to do with that old realm of enmity towards God and inability to please God (vv. 5–8). Turning back to this way will lead to death (vv. 12–13). Those who have the Spirit are to "kill off" (θανατοῦτε) the "deeds of the body" by the Spirit (v. 13) and so find life.
they possess the status of being "sons of God" (v. 14).\(^\text{57}\) The Spirit "received" at conversion is not "a Spirit of slavery again unto fear [cf. v. 2], but a Spirit of\(^\text{58}\) sonship [or, adoption]\(^\text{59}\) by whom we cry 'Abba! Father!'\(^\text{60}\) A spirit of slavery or servitude (δουλεία) would lead to fear, but the Spirit of sonship (by inference) leads to the Abba cry. In this cry, "the Spirit himself is testifying with our spirit that we are children of God" (v. 16).\(^\text{61}\) The dual nature of this testimony is precisely expressed by Paul: the Spirit bears witness with (συμμαρτυρεῖ) the human spirit


\(^{58}\) A "genitive of product"—to use the term of Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 106–107—the Spirit "produces" sonship; so also Jewett, *Romans*, 498. Trevor J. Burke, "Adoption and the Spirit in Romans 8," *EQ* 70 (1998): 314–318, argues that it is a genitive of quality, a "Spirit that 'goes with' … huiothesia" (317); one is always with the other because they belong to the same era.

\(^{59}\) The translation "sonship" here rather than "adoption" catches the echo of οικός in "his own Son" (v. 3), "sons of God" (v. 14), and the "Spirit of sonship" (v. 15). See Jewett, *Romans*, 519 n. 109, for comment. Paul's use of τέκνα as a substitute in vv. 16, 17 shows that it is not maleness that is at stake but status.

\(^{60}\) Gunkel, *Holy Spirit*, 79–80, argues that the Abba cry is an ecstatic utterance which provides objective evidence of the Spirit's presence and that this provides proof of sonship. But if this was the case, then Rom 8:15 would say, "[…] but we have received the Spirit of sonship who cries [κράζων] Abba Father." Neither the Romans' nor the Galatians' versions of the Abba cry permit a solo witness of the Spirit, as in, say Gal 3:1–5, or 2 Cor 12:12.

\(^{61}\) No causal or explanatory particle is found at the start of v. 16, leading some (e.g., NRSV) to run the sentence of verse 16 back into verse 15: "When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit […]." This seems unnecessary as Paul in v. 16 is moved by "profound emotion"—so Fréderic Godet, *Commentary on St Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (ed. T. W. Chambers; Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1977), 310, cited in Jewett, *Romans*, 500—as he reiterates v. 15. The emphasizing pronoun αὐτό is also resumptive of v. 15.
(now renewed by the Spirit of adoption) that "we are children of God." This double testimony, implied in Galatians 4:6, is clarified here.

Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:15–16 are making related yet different points from the same experience of the Abba cry. In Galatians, the Abba cry captures the moment of conversion and adoption. In Romans, the Abba cry highlights the ongoing dependence upon God as Father; it is placed in parallel to putting to death the deeds of the body (θανατοῦτε, present tense, v. 13) and being led by the Spirit (ἀγνωταῖ, present tense, v. 14). These ongoing outcomes demonstrate the truth of the opening statement that, "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (present tense copula added, v. 1), but they also have much to say about Paul's view of prayer. Firstly, it is important to recall that in his letters, Paul is not theologising about prayer, but addressing believers in the midst of an ongoing struggle against sin and its unwitting ally the Law (e.g., Rom 8:5–8, 9, 12–13). These passages are situated within the same eschatological tension that governs all

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62 So also Burke, "Adoption and the Spirit," 320, 322. There is a double testimony in a single event: one from the renewed human spirit within the Christian and another from the "Spirit of adoption." Contra Jewett, Romans, 500, who see "our spirit" as the Holy Spirit apportioned to Christians. The anthropological πνεῦμα is, according to J. Knox Chamblin, "Psychology," DPL: 771, "[…] that dimension of self through which the whole person engages in communion with God." See also Fee, God's Empowering Presence, 568, and Dunn, Romans, 454, who argue that "our spirit" in v. 16 is probably the "inner person" (τὸν ἐσώ ἄνθρωπον) of Rom 7:22 and Eph 3:16.

63 Bruce W. Longenecker, The Triumph of Abraham's God: The Transformation of Identity in Galatians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 61, argues that the neuter participle (κράζων) means that, "it is the Spirit that 'cries' [Abba Father] not the Christian," and, "it is the Spirit's voice that cries out to God on behalf of Christians" (emphasis added). Presumably he means that this occurred audibly, but he does not say so. See Cullmann, Prayer, 74–75, for details on the relationship between the Spirit speaking and a human being speaking in the Abba cry.

64 Note the aorists ἀπολάβωμεν and ἐξαπέστειλεν (which parallels the sending of the Son in v. 4—ἐξαπέστειλεν again), which signal a perfective aspect; the present participle κράζων in Gal 4:6 does not connote an ongoing "cry," since it "expresses action that is contemporaneous with its leading verb," Campbell, "Verbal Aspect in the Non-Indicative," 35.

65 Note the present tenses of vv. 15–16: κράζομεν, συμμαρτυρεῖ, ἐσμέν, and θανατοῦτε. Cf. Marchel, Abba, Père!, 224: "La différence proviendrait du point de vue auquel on se place. Tandis que la seconde explication voit ce témoignage plutôt à son stade initial, à savoir comment l'Esprit crée en nous notre esprit filial, la première considère notre esprit, pour ainsi dire dans son 'stade d'achèvement', c'est-à-dire comme déjà informé par l'Esprit divin et comme agissant conjointement avec lui."
Paul's statements on prayer. (This will be particularly evident in the following exegesis of Romans 8:26–27.) In Romans 8 the battle is to continue to walk according to the Spirit (present tense, περιπατοῦσιν, v. 4) and to continue to put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit (present tense, θανατοῦτε, v. 13). The Abba cry is uttered by believers—and therefore by the Spirit within them—in the midst of trials and confirms to them that they are not condemned, but justified before God (v. 1). In one sense the battle is won, in another it remains to be fought.

Secondly, however, it is not the mere uttering of the word "Abba" that effects the desired result. The cry is initiated within the "sons of God" by the "Spirit of sonship" (or, the "Spirit of his Son"). The believer's confidence before the Father in prayer arises from the application of the victory of the Son to them and their hearts by the Spirit, to which thanksgiving bears witness. At the same time, the Spirit is bringing praise to God through them. In short, there is no prayer to the Father without the ministry of the Spirit since it is he who enables prayer to the Father as God's children.66 Perhaps, once again, the "peace of God that passes all understanding," promised in Philippians 4:7, is being fleshed out in the Abba texts. What describes God's peace better than the indwelling of God's own Spirit (cf. Rom 5:1, 5, 10, 11)?

C. Conclusions from the Overview of Pauline Petitionary Prayer

The Pauline contribution to the question of the relationship of petitionary prayer and its limitations may not be as obvious as some of its New Testament counterparts but it is no less substantial particularly with respect to the confidence one may have in making requests of God. Paul's ebullience appears grounded in three things: (1) the generous and promissory nature of God as revealed in his Son (e.g., 2 Cor 8:9; 9:15). The generosity of God also appeared in Jesus' prayer promises and those found in James, but in Paul it is clearly connected to the fact that God's salvation plan has been announced in the gospel about his Son and is being brought to conclusion under

66 This would seem to be a development from the role of the Spirit in prayer from that found in the Synoptic and Johannine Gospels where the Spirit is either an additional outcome of prayer along with the request made or is the presence of the Father and the Son in the believers as well as their advocate in the context of the present distress. The exegeses of the following texts will prove important in drawing out the details of this observation.
his sure hand (Rom 8:28–30). (2) Access to God is unrestricted for those who have Christ as their advocate (2 Cor 1:20; Rom 8:34). Again, Jesus' mediatory role was a feature of the prayer material in the Synoptic Gospels and also in John. In Paul, Jesus is God's Yes (2 Cor 1:20), guaranteeing his forgiveness, protection, and listening ear. (3) God has given his Spirit to those he has adopted to enable them to come before him with boldness (Rom 8:15–16; Gal 4:6). The role of the Spirit in prayer was mentioned in Luke 11:13 and hinted at in the Farewell Discourses of John, but in Pauline prayer it is a key ground for confidence (among other things, see below).

Confident prayer is not exercised in the midst of peace and security, however, but—as a result of the Christ event—in the midst of spiritual and circumstantial opposition and heightened eschatological threat. Although God's purposes are being sovereignly brought to bear, his people are not shielded from persecution or suffering. Indeed, it is because they belong to Christ that they experience opposition (Rom 8:17). Their faith and unity are under attack and they must confidently enter the struggle through prayer with the weapons God supplies (Eph 6:10–20). The battle is not only waged in hand-to-hand combat with spiritual opposition, but also in the hum-drum of daily life, where all kinds of needs and stresses are felt. In this context, believers are called to remove anxiety and make every need known to God, seeking his provision in the assurance of his protective peace (Phil 4:6–7). The importance of prayer in "standing" resonates with the prayer scene in the Garden of Gethsemane (and with the preceding material in the eschatological discourse) of the Synoptic Gospels), forging the closest link between the two bodies of prayer material.

Another feature of Pauline prayer, and a more distinctive one, is that petition is never offered without thanksgiving (Phil 4:6; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:16–18). Thanksgiving celebrates the victory of Christ in the here-and-now provision of life's necessities and the overcoming of spiritual opposition. Paul commands the Christian to be joyful for the same reason (Phil 3:1; 4:4), although he or she must be ever wary of the next attack. The co-existence of dependent petition and joyful thanksgiving points to the ever-present eschatological tension of the "already–not yet" in Pauline prayer.

In all this, the Spirit forms the operational centre of Pauline prayer theology and practice. The Spirit enables the Christian to walk in the ways of Christ,
including the life of prayer. The activity of the Spirit is not restricted to success and joy in prayer (Rom 14:17), but is (especially) active in the heart of the Christian in the present distress (Rom 8:26–27; see ch. IX, below). The Spirit initiates prayer in the heart of the believer, enabling him or her to call out to God as "Abba! Father!" (Gal 4:6), and stimulates it as he or she struggles to be conformed to the sufferings of Christ and finally inherit the glory of God (Rom 8:15–17, 28–30; cf. Phil 1:18–20). The Spirit's ministry in prayer is to the inner core of the individual. He ensures the believer is secure, even in the midst of uncertainty and incapacity to pray, applying the victory of Christ in ways that, while not comprehensible to the believer, are nevertheless real and permanent. Yet, as the next chapter will show, the Spirit's ministry to the Christian in prayer is not only applied to the individual believer but also tuned into the "big picture" of God's salvation plan.

From this all too brief survey, the most obvious conclusion for the thesis question is that Paul expected prayers prayed in Jesus' name (and with faith, Phil 4:6–7) to be successful, whether they be for everyday needs or against foes in heavenly places. For Paul, prayer had to be successful; it was the means by which the Christian existed under God as he or she grasped Christ in the gospel and called him "Lord." He is fully aware of spiritual and non-spiritual opposition and frustrations as well as of the eschatological limits of the present time—a feature to be explored in the next two chapters in detail—but he always seems to be able to put these into the grander Christological themes of his thought. It is as if he has taken the foundational elements of the prayer material of the Synoptic Gospels—eschatology, Christology, and pneumatology—and drawn out all their implications. What is not apparent, and what also distinguishes Paul from the witnesses thus far considered (with the possible exception of John), are limitations to petition. Faith is an implied condition in Philippians 4:6–7, but the themes of God's will, forgiveness, and moral–community consistency, are virtually without mention. Perhaps the reason for this is that such limitations usually occur in the promises themselves, but in Paul, with only one prayer "promise," these restrictions are not made. Does this mean that there are no limitations to petitionary prayer in Paul? It is to this question that the next two chapters will give their attention.
IX. THE SPIRIT'S INTERCESSION IN PRAYER: ROMANS 8:26–27

A. Introduction

The previous chapter has established the confidence Paul considers believers possess in petitioning God, particularly in the face of spiritual and other kinds of opposition. This chapter and the next will consider Pauline texts that appear to restrict this confidence in some way. In the first text, Romans 8:26–27, Paul says twice that the Spirit assists the Christian in a manner that accords with God's will. Specifically, verse 26 says that the Spirit assists believers because, in their "weakness," they "do not know how to pray as is necessary" (καθὸ δὲ δεῖ) and verse 27 states that "the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to the will of God" (κατὰ τὰ θεόν). One conclusion regularly drawn by scholars from this text is that, among other things, petitionary prayer must accord with God's will to be successful. In this way Romans


8:26–27 may be taken as a limit to—or at least a guiding principle for the interpretation of—the promises to petition explored in the previous chapter.

In order to test the above proposition, this chapter will first set down the literary and theological context of Romans 8:26–27, which is crucial for a conclusive interpretation (section B). Next, after outlining the structure of the unit, section C undertakes the following investigations: (1) the nature of the "weakness" that requires the Spirit's assistance; (2) the nature of the Spirit's intercession with "sighs too deep for words"; (3) the nature and purpose of God in this process; and (4) the nature of the "will of God" according to which the Spirit intercedes. The conclusion of the chapter will reflect on whether this text should be considered as a prayer limitation in Paul (section D).³

B. The Literary Context of Romans 8:26–27

Romans 8:26–27 appears toward the climax of the section consisting of verses 18–30.⁴ The unit is part of a response to the lead statement of Paul in verse 18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy of comparison to the glory that is about to be revealed to us."⁵ The word "sufferings" (παθήματα) ties this verse firmly to verse 17, in which Paul states that the "children of God" are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, on the condition that "[they] suffer with [Christ, συμμάχομαι] in order that [they] might be glorified with him" (v. 17).⁶ The theme of suffering was raised in Romans 5:3, within a section (5:1–11) that bridges the first (chs. 1–4) and second (chs. 5–8) major units of the letter. Having declared the benefits of justification in 5:1–2, Paul says in verse 3 that "we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance [...]". In chapter 8, Paul

³ The overall impact of Rom 8:26–27 within the flow of Paul’s argument through the book as a whole is not great. As will be shown in the next section, the immediately preceding and following material is its primary context. For this reason it has not been considered necessary to develop a detailed discussion of the literary context of the unit within the whole of Romans. See ch. VIII.B.5 above for general comments about prayer in the Pauline Corpus.
⁴ The delimitation and composition of the unit vv. 18–30 is exhaustively discussed in Gieniusz, Romans 8:18–30, 57–88. For justification on vv. 18–27 as the primary literary context of vv. 26–27, see Käsemann, "Cry for Liberty," 127; Gerhard Schneider, "στενάξω, κτάλη," TDNT 7: 601.
⁵ Gieniusz, Romans 8:18–30, 87–88, and 89–133.
⁶ Gieniusz, Romans 8:18–30, 88.
returns to the theme of endurance of suffering to explore precisely how the Holy Spirit (now poured into the believer's heart, 5:5) brings this about. He will carry the theme of endurance to a crescendo at the end of chapter 8 (vv. 31–38), which probably forms the conclusion of the second major unit of the book (5:1[12]–8:38).

As has already been established in the preceding chapter, sufferings (παθήματα) for Paul belong to the era of heightened distress already revealed in the last days (cf. 2 Cor 1:4–7; Gal 5:24; Phil 3:10 [and 1:27–30]; Col 1:24). Romans 8:18–22 makes the point that the solidarity of suffering that exists between the Christian and Christ (v. 17) is mirrored by another between the Christian and the non-human creation (vv. 19–22) who both "groan" (vv. 22, 23).\(^7\) Presumably the groaning of both creation and the Christian is towards the same goal of redemption (v. 23). The children (or "sons," v. 14) of God possess the first fruits of the Spirit (v. 23) and are harbingers of the age to come. They are called to live by the Spirit within the eschatological tension of the "already" and the "not yet."\(^8\) The Spirit is the hallmark of both the "already" (e.g., bold access to the Father, vv. 15–16) and the "not yet" (e.g., groaning in anticipation of completed adoption, v. 23).\(^9\) Christians, says Paul, have been "saved in [view of] hope" (v. 24), that is, the hope just described in verse 23 as "the redemption of our bodies."\(^10\)

The futility to which creation has been subject and the suffering of Christians in the present time are not ultimately without conclusion or purpose. Romans 8:28

\[\text{\textsuperscript{7}}\] The precise nature of the "groans" conveyed in two key verbs in v. 22 (συστενάζειν [and cognates] and συνωδίνειν) has been much discussed. Some scholars emphasize connections with Gen 3:16 and understand the groans negatively (e.g., Geniusz, Romans 8:18–30, 148) while others emphasize "until the present time" (ἐκχωρί τοῦ νῦν) and see groans as intermediate steps to hopeful outcomes, e.g., Heinrich Schlier, Der Römerbrief (HTKNT 6; Freiburg/Basel/Vienna: Herder, 1977), 264. If there is a hint of messianic sufferings in v. 17—and hence vv. 18–27—then Paul is implying that the divine curse on creation is reaching its climax in the messianic woes. If this is the case, then the two words point to a more severe kind of anguish than that laid upon creation through the curse of Genesis 3:17. See Gempf, "Birth Pangs," 119–135, for further discussion. συστενάζει καὶ συνωδίνει should be read in a combined way according to Jewett, Romans, 517, contra Laurie J. Braaten, "All Creation Groans: Romans 8:22 in Light of the Biblical Sources," \textit{HBT} 28 (2006): 131–159.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{8}}\] Käsemann, "Cry for Liberty," 122–137, rightly highlights the theme of obedient living in this text since prayer—glossolalia for Käsemann, but the principle holds good regardless—must be seen as "the cry of the tempted for liberty" (135, emphasis added).

\[\text{\textsuperscript{9}}\] A point well-captured by Fee, \textit{God's Empowering Presence}, 560–575.

\[\text{\textsuperscript{10}}\] Jewett, Romans, 520.
states that "all things are being worked together [by God or, perhaps by the Spirit] for the benefit of those who love God." According to the following verse (v. 29), conformity to the likeness of "his Son"—that is, final glorification with Christ and full redemption of the body—is guaranteed by divine mandate. However, praying for the achievement of this purpose is restricted because all believers (including Paul, v. 26) are afflicted with "weakness" within the times of the messianic woes.

C. Exegesis

Romans 8:26–27 begins with a two-part thesis statement in verse 26: "Likewise the Spirit helps us [A] in our weakness [B]." The two parts of this statement are expanded—in reverse order—in verses 26b–27, with the "weakness" of the Christian further defined in verse 26b ("for we do not know how to pray as we ought" [B']),

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11 That it is the Spirit who "works all things together" is a strong option, but not one that needs discussion here. The verse is riddled with text-critical complexities. For the case in favour of the Spirit as the subject of sunergei', see Fee, God's Empowering Presence, 587–590; Jewett, Romans, 526–527. For the case against the Spirit and in favour of "God," see C. E. B. Cranfield, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975–1979), 1:425–428; Schreiner, Romans, 448–449.
12 Gieniusz, Romans 8:18–30, 131, notes that the certainty of the outcome was already stated in the use of the divine passive in v. 18, ἀποκαλυφθήσαται.
13 This depiction of the structure of the unit differs slightly from others, e.g., O'Brien, "Romans 8:26, 27," 68, who sees vv. 19–27 consisting of three sub-units (vv. 19–22; 23–25, 26–27) providing examples of the thesis statement of v. 18, and vv. 28–30 as a conclusion to the whole. The last unit probably gathers the whole of Rom 8 and not only vv. 18–27.
14 The insertion of ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν in Κ2 Ψ 33 Ambst makes plain what is implied in the verb prefix. The external strength of the omission is another factor in leaving the text as is.
15 Gieniusz, Romans 8:18–30, 211; and, O'Brien, "Romans 8:26, 27," 69, note the chiasm in v. 26.
while the action of the Spirit ("to help," συναντιλαμβάνεσθαι)\textsuperscript{16} is expanded in verse 26c [A']. Verse 27 expands upon the effects of the Spirit's intercession from the divine "side," emphasizing the success of the intercession. While the subject of verse 26 is the Spirit, the subject of verse 27 is "the one who searches the hearts" (i.e., God).

The unit opens with a connection formula (ὡς σαυτός δὲ καὶ) that has been interpreted in two ways. Geoffrey Smith links it back to verse 16, where the phrase "the Spirit itself" (αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα) is again found with an active verb.\textsuperscript{17} However, the formula normally refers to what immediately precedes. In this case, the similarity referred to looks back to Paul's argument in verses 18–25, which contain the same concepts to verses 26–27 (e.g., the Spirit, groaning). Thus the literary context of the unit is the preceding paragraph.

1. "Our Weakness"

Paul begins by noting that the Spirit helps believers in "our weakness" (τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν).\textsuperscript{18} The precise meaning of ἀσθενείᾳ ἡμῶν depends upon whether the accent

\textsuperscript{16} Bertone, "Glossolalia," 56; Gieniusz, Romans 8:18–30, 218; and, Moo, Romans, 523 n. 80, determine the meaning of συναντιλαμβάνεσθαι by breaking it apart into its prepositions: συν ("with") + αντί ("instead of") = assistance through cooperation. The oft-repeated illustration of "two persons carrying a log, one at each end"—e.g., Gieniusz, Romans 8:18–30, 218—is a rather stilted use of semantics. The context insists upon a substitution by the Spirit for the weakness of the saint in prayer (ὑπὲρ used twice with the main verb ἐντυχανείν); so also Gerhard Delling, ἀντιλαμβάνομαι, κτλ., "TDNT" 1: 376. This means that the assistance required is one that the Christian is incapable of providing.

\textsuperscript{17} Geoffrey Smith, "The Function of 'Likewise' (ὡς σαυτός) in Romans 8:26," TynBul 49 (1998): 29–38, argues that vv. 18–25 are a digression. He finds similar uses of ὡς σαυτός in the LXX and notes syntactical similarities between vv. 16 and 26, as well as a parallel with ὁμοίως in 1 Peter. Unfortunately, he does not investigate the whole construction, ὡς σαυτός δὲ καὶ, but only the first word. A study of the occurrences of the whole construction in both the LXX and the NT show that the meaning of ὡς σαυτός is always determined by the immediate context and strongly influenced by the καὶ, sometimes meaning little more than "also" (Jud 15:5; 3 Macc. 6:33). See the other occurrences in: Tob 7:10; 2 Macc 2:14; 15:39; Ep Jer 1:21; Mark 14:31; Luke 20:31; 1 Tim 5:25. Supporting this is the fact that ὡς σαυτός on its own regularly refers to what immediately precedes rather than what is far back in the flow of the letter or narrative (e.g., Matt 20:5; 21:30, 36; 25:17; Mark 12:21; Luke 13:5; 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; 1 Tim 2:9; 1 Tim 3:8, 11; Titus 2:3, 6).

\textsuperscript{18} Paul accounts for over half the uses of ἀσθενείᾳ and cognates in the NT. Within Romans note: ἀσθενείν, 4:19; 8:3; 14:1, 2; ἀσθενήματα 15:1; ἀσθενής, 5:6; ἀσθένεια, 6:19; 8:26; cf. Black, Apostle of Weakness, ch. 4; Gustav Stählin,
is placed on what follows (i.e., v. 26bc—the inability to pray aright), or on what precedes (i.e., vv. 18–25—the general eschatological restriction of the "not yet").

The first view has in its favour that Paul speaks, in verse 26bc, about how the Spirit helps the saints when they do not know what they ought to pray for, and introduces this with "for" (γὰρ). Many commentators who take "weakness" to refer to the inability to pray also interpret the clause καθὸ δὲ ἦταν to mean "according to God's will," inferring that the specific weakness is an inability to pray in accordance with God's will, however that may be defined.

The second view of the referent of "our weakness"—that it looks back to the whole of verses 18–25—implies that the frustration imposed upon creation and the Christian has also been imposed on their petitions and it is not easily overcome. As Käsemann says, the prayer for which the Spirit substitutes στεναγμοῖς ἀλλήλων is a necessary (δὲ ἦταν) one. That is, it is divinely claimed, not in the sense of an unchangeable law of fate, but that it is part of an unfolding yet incomplete plan of salvation.

This ignorance (οὐκ οἶδαμεν) is not a lack of "know-how" or even of "know-what" that will be corrected over time, but a limitation so fundamental and

"ἀσθενής, κτλ.," TDNT 1: 490–493; J. Zmijewski, "ἀσθενής, κτλ.," EDNT 1: 170–171. The word group is applied to the physically sick (e.g., Acts 28:9), to weakness as human beings (e.g., Matt 26:41; Rom 6:19; 1 Cor 15:43; 2 Cor 12:5, 9), or to religious or moral incapacity (e.g., Rom 5:6). In the last group, ἀσθενεῖα ranges from pre-conversion human enmity against God to neutral human incapacity compared to the power of God. In 1 and 2 Corinthians—where the theme of "weakness" is given its most thorough treatment—God is said to enter into the realm of the Christian's weakness and demonstrate his power, so that he/she might boast in him alone (1 Cor 1:18–31). Paul himself experienced the Spirit as God's powerful agent in moments of physical and spiritual incapacity (1 Cor 2:3–5; cf. 2 Cor 12:1–10; 1 Thess 1:4–7).


20 Cranfield, Romans, 1:420–421.

21 For example: Black, Apostle of Weakness, 195; Miller, Biblical Prayer, 321, 324; O'Brien, "Romans 8:26, 27," 71, 72; Obeng, "Reconciliation," 167; Schreiner, Romans, 446.


24 The pronominal phrase τὸ [...] τι προσευξώμεθα καθὸ δὲ ἦταν is in effect the object of the verb οὐκ οἶδαμεν. Moo, Romans, 523, n. 82, renders the clause of v. 26b, "the 'what-we-are-to-pray-as-it-is-necessary' we do not know." The construction
fixed that—in the present time of waiting—the Spirit of God is *required* to intercede in an ongoing way (ὑπερεντυχάνει; note the present tense here and throughout the unit).  

If the second view of "our weakness" is correct, then the "hope" from which this frustrated prayer springs (vv. 24–25) is not exercised in times of spiritual calm. Although the weakness has something of divine imposition about it, it nevertheless threatens Christian existence. As noted in the previous chapter, the believer longs for what is about to be revealed in the midst of present distress and suffering. In the present, says Paul, the saints do not know what to pray for, even though they have been given the same access to the Father as Jesus possessed (8:15–16; cf. Gal 4:6; Mark 14:36). It is in prayer—and particularly prayer in the midst of inability to respond properly to the "already–not yet" context—that the Christian's "weakness" comes to its most poignant expression. The Spirit ministers to the depths of the Christian in the midst of this weakness.

2. The Spirit's Intercession with "Sighs Too Deep for Words"
In response to the Christian's inability to pray, Paul says that the "Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." Two concepts are linked in this statement that need separate treatment: (1) the nature of the "sighs" that are "too deep for words"; and, (2) the nature of the intercession that the Spirit undertakes.

   a. "Sighs Too Deep for Words"
In this context of threat and frustration, the Spirit, unaffected by the eschatological–anthropological restriction, "intercedes with sighs too deep for words" (ὑπερεντυχάνει στεναμοῦς ἀλαλήτωις). The phrase στεναμοῦ ἀλαλήτωι is found only here in the New Testament. Paul refers earlier in Romans 8 to the creation and the Christian sighing ([συ]στεναζειν, vv. 22, 23). Here, however, he speaks of the Spirit sighing. How are the three uses of this rare verb connected? The

uses grammatical license since the verb δεῖ takes an infinitive verb in all but one other of its 100 NT occurrences.

25. The present tense is used in all but one of the verbs in the unit (συναντιλαμβάνεται, οἶδαμεν, ὑπερεντυχάνει, ὁ ἐραυνών, οἶδεν, ἐντυχάνει). The only non-present verb is προσευχόμεθα in v. 26b, which is required to convey the specific inadequacy of human prayer.


earlier references (vv. 22, 23) arise in the context of the creation or the believer longing for redemption or a release from decay because of the sufferings of the present age (cf. 8:18). The groans of the Spirit, however, arise as an intercession on behalf of the saints who do not know how to pray as they ought, probably due to a divinely imposed limitation in the "already–not yet" era of eschatological tension. Two main views have been proposed for the phrase στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοις: (1) that it refers to glossolalia or speaking in tongues; and (2) that it refers to silent prayer by the Spirit, not by the Christian. Both views have strengths and weaknesses and need to be outlined in order to grasp the import of this text.

i. Glossolalic Prayer by the Christian

The first view of στεναγμοῖς ἀλαλήτοι argues that they are audible, but not comprehensible, sounds made by the Spirit through the Christian in their weakness, specifically, glossolalia, or speaking in tongues (cf. 1 Cor 12:30; 13:1; 14:2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 13, 18, 23, etc.). Ernst Käsemann, the strongest proponent of this view in recent times, bases it on one main pillar: "The sighs must be highly noticeable phenomena, which as such attract our attention." These practices, he says, do not take place in private, but in "the church's assembly for worship." To translate ἀλαλήτος as "wordless" (or, "unuttered"), implies to Käsemann that a merely human phenomenon is being spoken of rather than that which is uttered by "the Spirit itself/himself" (αὐτὸ τὸ πνεῦμα). According to Käsemann, the Abba cry (Rom 8:15–16) is a parallel, ecstatic cry of "enthusiasts" in public worship to that found here in verse 26. The "sighs" of verse 26, therefore, are not wordless, but are like the "unutterable words" (ἀφρητα ῥήματα) of 2 Corinthians 12:2–4, things which...

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28 For example, "groanings too deep for words" (ESV); "unspeakable groanings" (Schreiner, Romans, 442), "unaussprechlichem Stöhren" (Ulrich Wilckens, Der Brief an der Römer [EEKNT 6; 3 vols.; Zurich: Benziger, 1978–1982], 2:146). The nature of glossolalia is another major area of research, which it is neither possible nor necessary to uncover at this point. For an introductory survey, see Luke Timothy Johnson, "Tongues, Gift of," ABD 6: 596–600; C. M. Roebeck, Jr., "Tongues," DPL: 939–943.

29 According to Cranfield, Romans, 1:423, the view goes back to Chrysostom and Origen.

30 Käsemann, "Cry for Liberty," 129.

31 Käsemann, "Cry for Liberty," 129.

emerge from and are understood in heaven alone, inspired by the Spirit.\textsuperscript{33} Glossolalia best fits this bill.

A frequent objection to Käsemann's view is that glossolalia in Paul's teaching is a "gift" of the Spirit given to some believers (cf. 1 Cor 12:10), yet the glossolalic view of Romans 8:26–27 applies it to all. Käsemann does not directly reply to this argument but says that those who deny the reference to glossolalia must face the question of how Paul—given his frequent instructions and examples about prayer (and the probable existence of the Lord's Prayer for the Christians in Rome and elsewhere)—could say in verse 26 that prayer was an area of ignorance for every Christian. The Spirit's intercession with στενοχωμοῖς ἄλαλήτοις is, according to Käsemann, therefore, something quite separate from "normal" prayer speech.

The reason Paul treats this subject, says Käsemann, is to argue against early Christian enthusiasts who boasted that glossolalia was an external manifestation of the heavenly gift of the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor 13:1).\textsuperscript{34} He says that for Paul, glossolalia is "the sighing for redemption from bodily temptation which is familiar to every Christian."\textsuperscript{35} Glossolalia, therefore, is not an expression of triumphalism, but of dependent weakness in the midst of the constant temptation to desert Christ. This interpretation fits well with the survey of Pauline petitionary prayer provided in the previous chapter: Paul's main concern is that Christians not be tempted to turn away from Christ in unbelief in the midst of strife. Gordon Fee extends Käsemann's argument (without buying into the somewhat dubious ecstatic-worship context):

\begin{quote}
[T]hese sentences as a whole and this phrase [στενοχωμοῖς ἄλαλήτοις] in particular […] refer to a kind of private ('to oneself') praying in tongues that Paul speaks about as part of his resolution of the practice of uninterpreted tongues in the worshiping community in Corinth.\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{33} Käsemann, "Cry for Liberty," 130.
\textsuperscript{34} A view, according to Gunkel, Holy Spirit, 75–86, that would be universal up to and including Paul.
\textsuperscript{35} Käsemann, "Cry for Liberty," 132–137. The link into Pauline theology as a whole is a master stroke that unfortunately relies on a supposed tension between a theologia gloriae and a theologia crucis not found anywhere in the context. The tension in Rom 8:18–27 is more cosmic and eschatological than ethical and Christological.
\textsuperscript{36} Fee, God's Empowering Presence, 580, and n. 324. See the whole of Fee's argument on pp. 579–585, for a fresh restatement of and supplement to the glossolalia view of Romans 8:26–27.
According to the glossolalia view of the expression "sighs too deep for words," then, Paul is concluding his discussion of the use of tongues begun in 1 Corinthians 12–14 (esp. 14:2, 13–15, 19, 28; cf. Eph 6:18[?]). But if this is the case, why has Paul not used the language of 1 Corinthians 12–14 (glossolalia, edification, charismata, etc.) to get his point across? Moreover, if glossolalia was an issue at Rome, why does Paul not raise it at the appropriate place (e.g., Rom 12:3–8)? Dunn's conclusion about the glossolalia view of Romans 8:26 is hard to resist: "[Paul's] Spirit talk in Romans is remarkably unguarded if 'enthusiasm' posed the very same threat in Rome as in Corinth." Nevertheless, Käsemann's observations that the intercession is aimed at preventing the Christian from falling into temptation and that the intercession of the Spirit is universally required remain important in any interpretation.

ii. Wordless Prayer by the Spirit

The proponents of the other main view of στεναγμοὶ ἀλαλήτων—that it refers to a silent prayer by the Spirit within the Christian—make the following arguments against the previous viewpoint: (1) based on word derivation, if the verb λαλέω means "to speak," then an adjective that negates this root (i.e., ἀλαλήτως) probably means "that which is not spoken," or, "wordless" rather than "inexpressible" or "too deep for words"; (2) Käsemann's point that the inability to pray cannot refer to all prayer, may be countered by the eschatological context in which Romans 8:26–27 is placed (as noted above); and, (3) if glossolalia is intended in Romans 8:26–27, then it is a different kind of phenomenon from 1 Corinthians 12–14 where it is more praise than petition; whatever else στεναγμοὶ ἀλαλήτων might be in the present context, it is likely to substitute for petitionary prayer and not praise.

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37 A view traceable at least to Gunkel, Holy Spirit, 85–90.
38 Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, 241.
39 BDAG, 41, "wordless." This view has led to the following translations of the expression: "wortlosen Seufzern" (K. Haacker, "Glaube II/3 Neues Testament," TRE 13: 161; Schlier, Römerbrief, 256); "unspoken groans" (Jewett, Romans, 504); "unspoken groanings" (O'Brien, "Romans 8:26, 27," 71). Cranfield, Romans, 1:423–424, goes as far as to say that the "groans" do not need to be verbalised since they are toward God, and "God knows the Spirit's intention without its being expressed."
40 Cranfield, Romans, 1:423.
41 Cranfield, Romans, 1:423. Fee, God's Empowering Presence, 581–583, on the basis of 1 Cor 14:15 ("I will pray with the spirit"), argues that Paul refers in Rom 8:26 to the Holy Spirit praying within the Christian. Since the contrast statement in
However, when it comes to defining precisely what στεναμοὶ ἀλαλῆτοι is, the proponents of the wordless prayer view suggest it refers to persistent prayers of the Spirit, beyond human consciousness, which occur within the Christian.\(^\text{42}\) In the words of Douglas Moo,

\begin{quote}
[I]t is preferable to understand these "groans" as the Spirit's own "language of prayer," a ministry of intercession that takes place in our hearts (cf. v. 27) in a manner imperceptible to us. This means, of course, that "groans" is used metaphorically.\(^\text{43}\)
\end{quote}

Others go a little further, suggesting that this intercession takes place at the same time as the Christian is praying.\(^\text{44}\) This view accords better with verse 27 where it is said that God "searches the heart," yet one wonders how the Spirit's groanings "are registered on the hearts of God's people" without their awareness.\(^\text{45}\)

While Käsemann's view that Romans 8:15–16 and 26–27 both refer to ecstatic worship is not supported explicitly from the text, he is right to draw a parallel between the two texts. Romans 8:15–16 offers the Abba cry as an experiential proof of sonship—it occurs in the human "heart" or "spirit" (Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6). In Romans 8:23—a text already shown to be connected to the present passage—Paul says that the location of the "groaning" of the believer in the present eschatological tension is "within ourselves" (v. 23, ἐν ἑαυτοῖς).\(^\text{46}\) Romans 8:27 indicates that the heart is the place in which God, by his Spirit, is at work. The proponents of the wordless prayer view of the "groanings" have correctly identified the heart as the place of intercession, but they have not drawn out the experiential consequences of this identification. Although no scholarly consensus exists about the phenomenon that context is that Paul will "pray with the mind," then surely "pray with the spirit" is a synonym for "pray in a tongue" (v. 14); cf. Eckhard J. Schnabel, \textit{Die erste Brief des Paulus an die Korinther} (HTANT 4; Wuppertal/Giessen: Brockhaus/Brunnen, 2006), 806–812.


\(^{44}\) O'Brien, "Romans 8:26, 27," 71.

\(^{45}\) The expression is O'Brien's, 71, emphasis added.

\(^{46}\) Dunn, \textit{Jesus and the Spirit}, 241.
referred to by the expression στεναγμοὶ ἄλαλήτουι ("sighs too deep for words") some kind of experiential awareness is probably intended by the phrase.

iii. Conclusion
Neither the glossolalic nor the non-glossolalic interpretation of the phrase "sighs too deep for words" (στεναγμοὶ ἄλαλήτουι) provides a convincing explanation of its meaning, purpose, or context. Three things can be affirmed with some certainty from the context and the above investigation: (1) the "sighs" are necessary because of a "weakness" that is absolute, which arises from a sense of helplessness deep within the Christian;47 (2) the groaning of the Spirit probably takes place in the heart of the believer and refers to some kind of spiritual experience, yet to be defined; (3) the groaning of the Christian for their adoption (i.e., the redemption of their body, v. 23) should probably be connected to the sighing of the Spirit, even though the subjects of the sighing are different. The basis of this connection is that both verses refer to groaning occurring within or being expressed by the individual in some deep way (either "we ourselves" [v. 23] or in the "heart" [v. 27; cf. Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6]). It is the "heart" of the petitioner where he or she experiences weakness and where the Spirit intercedes.

Cumulatively, these points suggest that the expression στεναγμοὶς ἄλαλήτοις refers to a sympathetic divine response on the part of the Spirit to the longings of the Christian for release. If this is the case, then perhaps Paul, in Romans 8:26, wants to assure the saints that the interceding action of the Spirit in/on their hearts (where their longing takes place) is not only effective in ensuring that communication with the Father has taken place, but also that the Spirit conveys these longings in a manner that matches the vulnerability of the frustrated petitioner.48 The Spirit is

47 Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, 241–242: "What Paul seems to have in mind [in the phrase στεναγμοὶ ἄλαλήτοι] is the only form of prayer left to the believer when he comes to the end of himself, frustrated by his own weakness (cf. Rom. 7.24; 2 Cor. 5.4) and baffled by his ignorance of God and of God's will. As he longs for the yet to be, the full adoption of sonship, the wholeness of redemption (Rom. 8.22f.; cf. 1 Cor 13:12), the only way his consciousness of God, that is of the first fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8.23), can come to expression is in the inarticulate groaning which confesses both his weakness and his dependence upon God."
48 Jewett, Romans, 524, and n. 170, based on, Heinrich Greeven, "εὑχομαι, κτλ.,” TDNT 2: 786, has recently compared the "groaning" of the Spirit with the "sighing" and "moaning" found in biblical laments (e.g., Psalm 5:1; 6:6; 31:10; 38:9; 102:5; Lam 1:21, 22; cf. Exod 2:23), which he suggests preceded or substituted for their
gentle with those who suffer (cf. Gal 5:23; Matt 11:29; Isa 11:2; 42:1–3). But the
gentleness of the Spirit is matched by the power of the Spirit. The Spirit who moved
the "heart" or "spirit" of the believer to cry out Abba Father (Rom 8:15–16; Gal 4:6)
now moves the heart of the believer to sigh in frustrated longing and prayer, and
takes the intention of these syllables to God as if they were his own.49 The prayer
promise of Philippians 4:6–7 echoes this power-in-weakness theme. In the midst of
anxiety, the praying believer is assured that "the peace of God, which exceeds all
understanding, will guard your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus." The theme of
"guarding" is appropriate as the discussion turns to the second part of the expression
under investigation, the nature of the Spirit's intercession (τὸ πνεῦμα
ὅπερ εὐγχάριστα
ὑπερεντυγχάνει).

b. The Spirit "Intercedes"
The verb "to intercede" (ὑπερεντυγχάνειν) is found only here in the New
Testament,50 although the verb ἐντυγχάνειν and the preposition ὑπὲρ are used
together in Romans 8:27, 34 and Hebrews 7:25 to carry the same meaning. The
latter two uses speak of the exalted Christ who "intercedes" or "pleads" to the Father
on behalf of believers,51 but there are no other New Testament references to the
Spirit's intercession than Romans 8:26, 27, a matter of discussion within
scholarship.52

Scholars have turned to the comparative literature in search of both the idea of
intercession and the use of the verb ἐντυγχάνειν. Within the biblical and Second
Temple literature generally, the intercession of one human being on behalf of another
before God is widespread, including times of a trial or divine judgement (e.g., Gen
18:22–32; 20:17; Exod 8:8, 12, 28–30; etc.). In the same vein, angels are regularly
portrayed as interceding for the suffering righteous ones throughout the Second

50 It is found in a separated form in Romans 8:27, 34 and Hebrews 7:25.
51 BDAG, 1033. It is a combination of ἐντυγχάνειν with one of its regular
Temple period and beyond. Furthermore, the verb ἐντυγχάνειν is also used within the Septuagint in a legal sense of "appeal" or "advocate" on behalf of another. There is no mention of the Spirit in any of these contexts. However, the advocacy of the Spirit within a time of distress is found in the Gospels (though without using the verb ἐντυγχάνειν; e.g., Mark 13:11 par. Matt 10:19, 20; Luke 12:11, 12; 21:14, 15; cf. John 15:26–27; 16:8–11). A general picture of advocacy or intercession before God by a spiritual being on behalf of the stricken righteous can be conceived, therefore, within the relevant prior literature.

Is there any evidence of the above understanding of intercession as advocacy during distress within the content or context of Romans 8:26? Three things come to mind: (1) the "already–not yet" context of verses 18–25 (and possibly, the Messianic woes, v. 17) has already been shown to reflect a longing for release from bondage; (2) Paul uses the word "saints" (ἁγιοί) to refer to Christians in verse 27, a term used elsewhere in Bible to refer to the suffering righteous (e.g., Dan 7:25, 27 LXX; cf. 1 Macc 1:46); and, (3) Paul's only other use of ἐντυγχάνειν (with οὕτω)—Romans 8:34—points to a cosmic trial scene (vv. 31–38).

53 Obeng, "Spirit Intercession," 361–364; and Dunn, Romans, 478, mention the following parallels: e.g., 2 Macc 15:12–16; Wis 1:6–9; 9:17–18; Tob 12:12, 15; 1 En. 9.3; 15.2; 99.3; 104.1; T. Levi 3.5, 6; 5.6, 7; T. Jud. 20:1–5; T. Dan 6.2; As. Mos. 11.15, 17; 12.6; cf. Job 33:23–26. 1 En. 9.1–11 provides a good illustration. The archangels observe the bloodshed inflicted upon innocent humans whose souls then present a case and plead with them to appeal to God. Indeed, in v. 10 the pleas are called "their groaning." If, in addition to this, it is conceded that "spirit" and "angel" are considered synonyms by the time of Paul (so Johannes Behm, "παρακλητος," TDNT 5: 811), then, the Spirit's intercession in Romans 8:26 is only a relatively short step away; so Obeng, "Origins," 621–632.


55 The Johannine Paraklete is considered by many to fit within this framework as Jesus (through his disciples) comes under cosmic trial. See Behm, "παρακλητος," 807–809; John Ashton, "Paraclete," ABD 5: 152–153, for basic material, but Andrew T. Lincoln, Truth on Trial: The Lawsuit Motif in the Fourth Gospel (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2000), for more advanced discussion.

56 H. Seebass and C. Brown, "Holy," NIDNTT 2: 227. In Tob 12:15, for example, angels present the prayers of the suffering "saints" to God. When not reserved for Jewish Christians (e.g., Rom 15:16), the word ἁγιοί usually refers to Christians having been chosen and set apart by/for God (e.g., Rom 1:7; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; 4:22; 2 Thess 1:10); so Otto Procksch, "ἁγιος, κτλ.," TDNT 1: 107–108.

57 The trial metaphor has been on view since at least v. 1 with the mention of κατάκρισις ("a judicial verdict invoking a penalty," BDAG, 519, κατάκρισις). It is
reasonable to conclude that Paul wants the readers of Romans 8:26–27 to know that, in the midst of threatening eschatological trials, when right petition is not attainable, the Spirit acts in a defensive way on their behalf before God.

This interpretation of the intercession of the Spirit in Romans 8:26–27 contradicts a more common one: that the Spirit's intercession consists of his praying in place of the Christian.\(^{58}\) In this view, a link is made with the intercession of the Son in verse 34, which is also said to be prayer. Stuhlmacher goes so far as to equate the Spirit's intercession with the Son's.\(^{59}\) Other scholars think that the Spirit's intercession takes place in heaven.\(^{60}\) These views do not square with the depiction of God in verse 27 as the "one who searches the heart [. . .]". Such a description presumes the intercession to take place within the Christian, the same place where the Spirit cries "Abba! Father!" (Rom 8:15; cf. Gal 4:6) and from which the Christian groans (Rom 8:23). The above analysis of the interceding work of the Spirit does not necessitate a prayer request by the Spirit, though alternatives to this view are not easy to conceive. What is important to note here, however, is that the intercession of the Spirit begins within the believer (v. 26) and is captured by God who searches the believer's "heart" (v. 27); the intercession of Christ [Jesus], however, is "at the right hand of the Father" (v. 34).

3. "The One Who Searches the Heart Knows the Intention of the Spirit"
In verse 27 Paul turns from the Spirit who intercedes to the God who is interceded. God is depicted as the one "who searches the hearts" (ὁ [. . .] ἐρωτάντων τὰς καρδίας). In this verse, Paul's intention is to comfort the readers in their distress by describing how the intercession of the Spirit depicted in verse 26 takes effect.\(^{61}\)
Paul's point is that at the same time God is searching the heart of the believer he knows the interceding intention of the Spirit (τί τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος). God's knowledge of the heart is contrasted with the ignorance of those overcome by their weakness. The neuter interrogative pronoun τί and the verb εἴδεναι in verse 27b echo verse 26b ("the thing we ought to pray for we do not know"; τὸ γὰρ τί προσευξώμεθα καθό δεῖ οὐκ οἴδαμεν), but Paul makes the opposite point here in verse 27. Where as in verse 26b the believer does not know "what" (τί) it is necessary to pray for (v. 26b), here in verse 27a God knows "what" (τί) the Spirit's way of thinking is (οἶδεν τί τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος). God and his Spirit share complete and intimate knowledge of the saints and their context. Verse 27a ("And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit [...]," NRSV) is not a statement of the obvious (i.e., that God knows the intention of his Spirit), but a reminder that God "hears" the Spirit's inexpressible and empathetic advocacy—intercession ("groaning") from within the Christian (v. 26; cf. v. 23), who is at the same time longing for redemption in the midst of trials. The Christians' "groanings" within (v. 23), out of which they attempt to pray (v. 26), are captured within the Spirit's groanings of intercession (v. 26, see previous section) and now, says Paul, God knows these and their intent fully (v. 27a).

4. "For the Spirit Intercedes for the Saints according to the Will of God"

Paul explains (ὅτι) the "process" whereby God comprehends the intention of the Spirit (Rom 8:27a) in the final clause of the unit: "for the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to God" (ὅτι κατὰ θεόν ἐντυγχάνει ὑπὲρ ἄγιον). In this explanation Paul adds something new that is intended to provide further comfort: that the Spirit intercedes according to God. It is to this important and phrase that the discussion now turns.

Both Chapter I and the introduction to this chapter have raised the view of some that the reference to the "will of God" in Romans 8:27 implies a limitation upon petitionary prayer in Paul. The argument is that if the Spirit of God is

verb (οἶδεν) and its object (τί τὸ φρόνημα τοῦ πνεύματος) rather than its subject, God. The searching presence of God in this context is more likely to be one of comfort (cf. 2 Cor 1:3) than assessment.

62 BDAG, 1066, φρόνημα.

63 The ὅτι is probably better read as an explication of the first half of the verse than as a basis for it; so Jewett, Romans, 525.
conforming the frustrated prayer of the Christian (v. 26) to the will of God (v. 27),
then surely all prayer should be conformed to this outcome as well, hence
guaranteeing its success.

Those who argue for the wordless-prayer-of-the-Spirit view of the expression
"sighs too deep for words" (στεναγμοῖς ὀλαλήτοις) concur with this argument.
The Christian, who wants to pray according to God's will but is unable to do so, is
now covered by the Spirit's groanings which always accord with God's will (v. 27).64

Since these intercessory groanings of the Holy Spirit coincide completely with the will of God, then the requests are always
granted. Not only does the Father know of their content; he
approves of them.65

Or, again:

The point is that since the Spirit intercedes in accord with God's
will, his prayers are always answered. [...] Believers should take
tremendous encouragement that the will of God is being fulfilled in
their lives despite their weakness and inability to know what to
pray for. [...] The deepest longings (groanings) of our heart are to
accomplish the will of God. The Spirit, Paul teaches, is carrying
out these desires via his intercessory ministry.66

Several assumptions guide these interpretations. Firstly, in defining the
"weakness" of verse 26, they appear to overlook the nature of the context of prayer in
verses 26–27 as being one that necessitates (καθό δει, v. 26) the intercession of the
Spirit rather than merely a lack of knowledge. Secondly, the groanings of the Holy
Spirit are thought to be requests rather than an advocacy within the "already–not yet"
era. Thirdly, they fail to define the phrase κατὰ θέσιν in verse 27 within the context
of Paul. To translate it as the "will of God" is reasonable, but the phrase needs to be
framed within the argument of Romans 8 and in Paul generally.67 Since this phrase

64 Gebauer, Das Gebet, 169.
66 Schreiner, Romans, 446–447.
67 Gieniusz, Romans 8:18–30, 236–237, tries to avoid translating it as "the will of
God" by arguing that the phrase κατὰ θέσιν means "after the manner of God." The
phrase κατὰ θέσιν is found in a number of places in Paul. In 2 Cor 7:9–11 Paul
contrasts "worldly grief" (ἡ [...] τοῦ κόσμου λύπη) that accomplishes death with
"godly grief" (v. 10, ἡ [...] κατὰ θέσιν λύπη) that works repentance towards
salvation (v. 10). The majority of commentators hold κατὰ θέσιν here to mean
"according to God's will," not intending a hidden divine decree, but in a way that is
known to always please God (i.e., repentance leads to salvation, which is always
God's will); cf. Paul W. Barnett, The Second Epistle to the Corinthians (NICNT;
is at the heart of the overall thesis discussion (see, chs. II.C.4.c; IV.B.2.e; VII.C, above), it requires more detailed examination, beginning with the nature of the "will of God" within Pauline prayer.

a. The "Will of God" in Pauline Prayer
Paul views his whole ministry within the "will of God." He regularly introduces himself to his readers as one who is, "called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by [Greek, δι' τὸν θεόν] the will of God" (1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1). This relative clause could be a defensive move toward churches where his ministry as an apostle was under threat or not recognised. However, there is just as much evidence to argue that Paul is not using the term tendentiously, but that he genuinely believed in the divine origin of his call and mission on the Damascus Road (cf. Rom 1:1, 5; 1 Cor 15:8; Gal 1:1, 11, 15–16; cf. 2 Cor 10:13; 11:23; 13:10; Eph 3:2–3, 7–9) and its continued superintendence by the risen Christ (1 Cor 4:19; 16:7; cf. 16:12).

In the Letter to the Romans, the phrase the "will of God" is used in two prayer contexts (1:10; 15:32).

In both contexts Paul tells the readers that he wants to see

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E.g., Barrett, Second Corinthians, 53–54. It is curiously absent from the address of Galatians, however.

69 It is interesting to read the outcome of his deliberations in 2 Cor 1:12–2:13; 7:5–16.

70 Both references are connected to his proposed visit to that city, and both are placed in the "bookend" position for maximum attention, i.e., in the Exordium ("Introduction," 1:1–13) and in the Peroration ("Conclusion," 15:14–16:24); so
them and to come to them (1:10, 13; 15:23, 29). Under his divinely-given mandate to "preach the gospel where Christ has not been named" (15:20), he wants to enlist the saints in Rome in a future mission to Spain (15:24, 28). He requires not only material resources and contacts, but also spiritual resources—especially unity among the Roman churches and wholehearted agreement with the mission and ministry of their apostle. In this framework, Paul not only says that he is praying that God would make it possible in his will for him to visit them (1:10), he also requests that they join with him in "earnest prayer to God on my behalf" (15:30) to be rescued from the unbelievers in Jerusalem, so that he may continue on to them as soon as practicable (vv. 31–32). They are especially to pray that the whole process (including both the "rescue" in Jerusalem and his "coming" to them) will take place "by God's will" (διὰ τῆς θελήματος θεοῦ, 15:32)—the precise phrase used in the address (1:10). In Paul's mind, therefore, both he and the church are involved in praying for the will of God to be done with respect to the apostolic ministry of extending the gospel's reach among the Gentiles. This was a matter of concern for Paul's prayers and prayer instructions elsewhere in his writings (Col 4:3; 1 Thess 5:25; 2 Thess 3:1; Eph 6:19; and, Philm 22), highlighting a connection between the will of God, Paul's mission under Christ, and petitionary (as well as intercessory) prayer.

It is surprising to observe how dominating the theme of the salvation plan of God, unveiled through the preaching of the gospel is in relationship to the uses of Jewett, Romans, vii, ix, 29–30. See comparison of the sections in Wiles, Paul's Intercessory Prayers, 187–188.

71 Jewett, Romans, 73–79.
72 NRSV, συναγωνίσασθαι μοι ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, literally, "to struggle with me in prayers to God on my behalf."
73 When he accompanies a financial gift of the Gentiles of his mission churches to the poor among the Jerusalem church. The "ministry for the saints," as he calls it in Rom 15:25, plays an important and multifaceted role in Paul's ministry. Paul aches for his own people, the Jews (Rom 10:1) and struggles with his own countrymen who seek to undermine his ministry from within and destroy it from without. Paul hopes the collection for the poor Jewish Christians in Judea will be a unifying gift from the Gentile Christians won to Christ through his ministry under God. See Paul's treatment in Rom 15:25–28; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Cor 8–9; Gal 2:10; cf. Acts 24:17). For surveys and bibliography on the collection, see L. Ann Jervis, "Contribution for the Saints," ABD 1: 1131; Scot McKnight, "Collection for the Saints," DPL: 143–147. Jewett, Romans, 80–90, argues persuasively that Paul's enlisting of the Roman churches for the mission to Spain is premised in no small part on the basis of the unity of the Jewish and Gentile church groups within that city.
"will of God." Those uses that appear to refer to God's sovereignty in election and salvation (e.g., Rom 9:18 [twice, using θελειν], 22; cf. βοώλεσθα is used in Rom 9:19; Gal 1:4) are coloured by the mission given to Paul to bring the gospel to the Gentiles. The so-called "moral" uses of the phrase (e.g., 1 Thess 4:3) also overlap with the will of God revealed in God's salvation plan (e.g., Rom 12:2; Eph 5:17; Phil 2:13; Col 1:9, and 4:13).

More important still is the connection between the will of God, prayer, and the centrality of Christ in Paul's thought, an aspect highlighted in 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18:

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (NRSV)

The indentation of the final line highlights the view of those scholars who see all three prayer instructions as being the "will of God." The "will of God" is every kind of prayer that encompasses every circumstance in every season. But most important of all, praying in accordance with God's will here is not the will of God in the abstract but "in Christ Jesus" (ἐν Χριστῷ Ιησοῦ), who lies at the heart of God's good purpose for the readers (1 Thess 1:2, 9–10; 5:9–10) and hence for their prayers.

The "will of God" in Paul, therefore, is not a remote or mysterious plan determined by God but the unfolding salvation plan of God that is grounded in the Christ-event, which catches up the actions and prayers of Paul and all who belong to Christ. It attaches itself to every circumstance and prayer opportunity in response to God's gracious initiative in his Son. How does this more nuanced understanding of the "will of God" inform the reading of Romans 8:27b?

b. The Spirit of Christ, the Will of God, and Prayer

As the discussion of Romans 8:26–27 has shown thus far, the Spirit's intercession is offered in the context of the "already–not yet" eschatological tension that has affected the whole creation as well as the believer. But, it will be recalled, this

74 Schrenk, "θέλω, θέλεια, κτλ.," 56–57. In Ephesians, θελήμα is used three times to refer to God's sure and certain eternal plan of salvation (Eph 1:5, 9, 11; cf. Col 1:27, which uses θελειν), the "mystery" (Eph 1:9) revealed to Paul to make known (3:9). He asks God to fulfil this mandate not only through his own ministry but also through that of the readers (Eph 1:16–19; 3:14–19; Phil 1:9–11; Col 1:9–14).
75 Fee, God's Empowering Presence, 54 n. 68.
tension comes about because the believer is an "heir of God, fellow heir with Christ, provided that [s/he] suffers with him in order that [s/he] may be glorified with him" (8:17). Paul connects suffering with Christ with being an "heir" of God throughout Romans 8 so that adoption by the Spirit (sonship) is necessarily connected with Christology (the Son). It was the Son whom God sent in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sin offering so as to condemn sin in the flesh of those who walk not by the flesh but by the Spirit (vv. 3–4). It is the Son into whose likeness the Christian is being conformed (v. 29), the Son whom God did not spare but gave up "for us all" (v. 32). This Son is spoken of throughout the chapter as "Christ" or "Christ Jesus" (vv. 1, 2, 9, 10, 11, 17, 34, 35, 39), that is, the Messiah, Jesus.\(^76\) The Spirit, therefore, is effective in applying life (vv. 2, 10, 11, 13), sonship (v. 15), and interceding with advocacy (vv. 26–27) because he is the "Spirit of Christ" (v. 9) or the "Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (v. 2).\(^77\)

To put all this in the context of Romans 8:26–27, the suffering or weakness experienced by Christians in the present age, expressed in frustration in prayer, is being woven by the Spirit into their final glorification with Christ (v. 17; cf. v. 30) via their daily being conformed to Christ (v. 29). Until the day of redemption (v. 23), the sympathetic and advocatory intercession of the Spirit will supply confidence to the depths of the Christian, reminding them that they are children of God (v. 15–16), that in Christ there is no condemnation (v. 1), and that, in spite of their stumbling prayers, God—though the Spirit of Christ—hears their longing as they wait. The "will of God" (or, "according to God") in Romans 8:26–27 is not an unknown or unpredictable fate for the believer, but God's plan of salvation announced in the gospel that Paul has delivered in the first half of the letter to the Romans. It is into this salvation plan that the Spirit translates the prayers of the saints who continue to struggle towards the glory yet to be revealed.

Romans 8:26–27 is not really saying that misguided or uninformed petitions are redirected by the Spirit to conform to God's predetermined plans, but that the immovable and prayer-inhibiting weakness that afflicts all Christians does not stymie

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\(^77\) The connection of "Spirit" and "Christ" can be assumed throughout the chapter, even when not specifically mentioned, such as in verses 14–16 and 26–27 (both these units climax with clear Christological import, vv. 17, 28–30).
the forward movement of God's salvation plan, and that even prayers born of frustration are included by the Spirit in a fashion that ensures this is the case. The individual and corporate quest for redemption and God's glory will not be in vain (8:28).

D. Conclusions from Romans 8:26–27

The previous chapter concluded that the accent of Pauline prayer was upon confidence in prayer and that limitations were few and far between. Romans 8:26–27 is considered by many scholars to provide a strong limitation to petitionary prayer in Paul and needed to be considered in detail. A number of features of this text—in particular, the nature of the believers' "weakness" and the Spirit interceding "according to the will of God" (κατὰ τὸ θεὸν)—seemed to support this view. The investigation showed, however, that the "weakness" that affected prayer was from outside the believer and connected with the "not yet" of the present era. In this context, the sympathetic intercession of the Spirit with the Father takes place on their behalf with sighs that, while they cannot be expressed in human words, contribute to God's ultimate purpose. Because the Spirit's intercession takes place in the "heart" of the petitioner (vv. 27, 23; cf. v. 15–16; Gal 4:6; Phil 4:7) in and through their own inadequate desires and obstructed syllables, their very own prayers are indeed being captured by God as they are in the outworking of his plan. The certainty that God has heard their frustrated prayers rests on the deep and intimate knowledge that the Spirit always intends to bring about the fulfilment of God's plans in Christ, that is, God's will. There is more than a hint in this passage of the ongoing trial of the Christian in the present age outlined in the previous chapter (VIII.B.2; cf. Rom 8:31–39). In the present era, believers must be content in the knowledge that God knows their circumstances, their heart, and the intercessions of the Spirit, and, that the intercessions of the Spirit accord with God's justifying and glorifying purposes for them in Christ Jesus (8:28–30).

Romans 8:26–27 should not, therefore, be placed among texts that condition successful prayer by God's will or that minimise the significance of petitions that arise from believers' hearts. The limitation addressed by Paul in this text is one that is imposed from without, as part of God's "not yet" of the present time. A similar limitation was seen in Gethsemane where Jesus faced the "hour," a time Jesus
predicted would afflict the disciples as well. Paul, aware of the threatening time in which God's people live, indicates in this text that the Spirit (of God and Christ) is sent into the believers' hearts to be attuned to their hopeful longings for the day of redemption and to intercede with God according to God's purposes. Where the Synoptic Gospels and John suggest the work of the Spirit at the centre of the "already–not yet" eschatological tension, Paul gives a more specific (though brief) explanation.
A. Introduction

According to Paul, petitions are offered to God confidently expectant of answer and assured of his presence in spite of spiritual and other kinds of opposition. This confidence is grounded in: (1) the name of Jesus by which all prayer is offered, (2) the promise made by God that petitioners will be heard and granted his protecting peace, and (3) the fact that God knows the intention of his Spirit who constantly intercedes for the embattled saints in the unfolding of his salvation plan. No event is too insignificant to gain God's attention when brought to him in faith and with thanksgiving (Phil 4:6–7). All things are being worked by God for the good of those who love him. Moreover, since he has given them his Son, will he not also give them all things along with him (Rom 8:28–39)?

In the light of the assurance Paul displays for petitionary prayer in general, it comes as somewhat of a surprise to find that some scholars doubt the apostle Paul prayed for his own needs. Yet a close examination of his letters will reveal Paul very rarely speaks of his prayers for himself, even though he requests prayer for himself (and others) in regards to his mission (e.g., Rom 15:30–32; Eph 6:19–20; Col 4:3–4; 2 Thess 3:1–2; Phlm 22)—and he occasionally exhorts his readers to pray for their own needs (esp. Phil 4:6; cf. Col 4:2, implied by v. 3; 1 Thess 5:16). Why is Paul so shy about making requests for his own needs? Perhaps he assumes his readers know that he prays for himself, just like he assumes that they pray for themselves? Yet the infrequency with which prayer for self is mentioned by Paul requires explanation.

At the heart of this question lies the "thorn in the flesh" episode in 2 Corinthians 12. In 2 Corinthians 12:8, Paul says that he pleaded three times with the Lord (Jesus) that a "thorn in the flesh" (v. 7b, also described as an "angel of Satan") be removed from him so that he might continue his ministry. Paul's immediate request was not granted and—it may be surmised—his "thorn" remained with him to the end of his days. However, this was not the end of the story. Paul did receive an "answer" from the Lord that established the character of his apostolic existence from that moment on: "My grace is sufficient for you; power is perfected in weakness" (v. 9a). Some scholars say that Paul's conclusion from all this was that he was no longer
to pray for himself, but—in the assurance of Christ's presence—to endure all his afflictions in a Christ-like fashion.¹ Other scholars have drawn from this incident the principle that the assurance of the Lord's grace is more important than a specific answer to a specific prayer.² To others again, it will provide evidence of the need to ensure prayer requests are not for the trivial or mundane.

The aim of this chapter is to test whether 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 does lead to the conclusion that, following the thorn in the flesh incident, Paul was led no longer to pray for himself, but rather to endure Christ-like suffering in anticipation of more ethereal benefits, such as God's presence. Such a conclusion would establish such a firm limitation to petitionary prayer that it would remove all confidence, contradicting the findings of the earlier chapters of this section on Paul and the study as a whole to this point.

The exegesis of 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 forms the climax of Paul's argument in chapters 10–13—and possibly the book as a whole. Paul's prayer and the Lord's response are not able to be easily separated from this argument. It will be necessary, at the start, to set out Paul's argument by way of establishing its literary, historical, and theological context (section B) before detailed exegesis can take place (section C). Once the main text of 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 is dealt with, the final section of the chapter will turn to consider what other evidence exists for the view that Paul prayed for himself so that a more complete picture can be sketched of Paul's prayer and its limitations.

B. The Literary and Historical Context of 2 Corinthians 12:7–10

The main issue that caused 2 Corinthians to be penned by Paul, and the one upon which all minor issues depended, was the validity of his own apostolic ministry to the Corinthian church.³ Behind the church's criticisms and its diminishing of his

¹ So, e.g., Miller, Biblical Prayer, 323.
² Cullmann, Prayer, 85–86; Ellis, Answering, 35–36.
³ It is not necessary for the purposes of this chapter to give an exhaustive account of the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians at this point. For a summary of research on the relationship between Paul and the Corinthians see: Reimund Bieringer, "Zwischen Kontinuität und Diskontinuität: Die beiden Korintherbriefe in ihrer Beziehung zueinander nach der neueren Forschung," in The Corinthian Correspondence (BETL 125; ed. Reimund Bieringer; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1996), 3–38. Frances M. Young and David F. Ford, Meaning and Truth in 2 Corinthians, 29.
authority appears to be a group of Jewish-Christian "apostles" who have entered into (and been received by) the Corinthian church (2:17; 3:1; 5:12–13; 10:1–11:22). This group has highlighted a contradiction between Paul's "impressive" (βαρός) and "vigorouς" (σκυρός) letters (cf. 2:4; 7:8–9) and his "weak" (ἀκοινός) bodily presence and very average (ἐξουθενμένος) rhetorical ability (10:10; cf. 1 Cor 1:18–25). At the same time the opponents appear to display their own credentials for Paul to make his promises (2 Cor 1:15–23). For discussion of Paul's so-called "flattery" here and in ch. 10, see Peter Marshall, Enmity in Corinth: Social Conventions in Paul's Relations with the Corinthians (WUNT 2/23; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1987), 317–339. The Corinthians also detect insincerity in his desire to remain free from financial dependence upon them while drawing support from another church (11:7–11; 12:14–15; cf. 1 Cor 9:1–23). This concern has led to the accusation of financial impropriety (12:16–18; cf. 2:17). Christopher Forbes, "Comparison, Self-Praise and Irony: Paul's Boasting and the Conventions of Hellenistic Rhetoric," NTS 32 (1986): 14–15, briefly places this disagreement into the context of Greek social mores. For more detailed examinations from differing bases see: Marshall, Enmity in Corinth, 165–258; David G. Horrell, The Social Ethos of the Corinthian Correspondence: Interests and Ideology from 1 Corinthians to 1 Clement (SNTW; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), 199–233. For an alternative view on the financial issues (under a different letter order), see Margaret M. Mitchell, "The Corinthian Correspondence and the Birth of Pauline Hermeneutics," in Paul and the Corinthians: Studies on a Community in Conflict. Essays in Honour of Margaret Thrall (NovTSup 109; ed. Trevor J. Burke and J. Keith Elliott; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 20–36.


Winter, Philo and Paul, 229–231, raises the possibility that this is a quote based on 1 Cor 2:3–4; 4:10. Marshall, Enmity in Corinth, 64–66, notes that highlighting physical defects was an accepted part of invective in rhetoric.

5 Margaret E. Thrall, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994, 2000), 2:629–633, reviews the possible inferences of these accusations. It is unlikely the apostle had no ability in rhetoric, his letters are "weighty." But it is possible he was not schooled in—or, had no willingness to engage in—the Sophistic arts of public debate; cf. Winter, Philo and Paul, 214–216, 223. Another suggestion, supported by the following context in 2 Cor, is that Paul's trade diminished his status as a rhetor; so Furnish, 2 Corinthians, 479. See Forbes, "Comparison," 22–24, for comments on Paul's education. On the social context of Paul's churches, and how they would have viewed him, see, e.g., Horrell, Social Ethos, passim; Gerd Theissen, The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity (SNTW; trans. John H. Schütz; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1982), 27–67; Winter, Philo and Paul, 203–239.
through boasting about their "visions and revelations" (12:1–4, and ecstatic spirituality, 5:13?), and performing "signs and wonders" among the church (12:11, 12; cf. 5:13?). They also carry "letters of commendation" (3:1) to testify to their sincerity and authority.

At the heart of Paul's response to these charges and counter-claims to authenticity is the question of what constitutes a valid "boast" of one's ministry. This theme dominates Paul's argument in chapters 10:1–12:13, and comes to its climax in 12:1–10 (see, vv. 1, 5, 6, 9). According to Paul, the only legitimate boasting is that in which the Lord is the object (2 Cor 10:17; cf. 1 Cor 1:31; Deut 10:21; Jer 9:22–23). Any other kind of boasting is mere self-commendation (or, "boasting in the flesh" [10:2–4; cf. Phil 3:3]), based on "comparison" with others, and therefore "unthinking" (10:12; cf. Rom 2:1–3, 17; 3:27; 4:2; 5:2, 3, 11; 11:18; etc.). Yet how

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9 See Lambrecht, "Dangerous Boasting," 335–339, for the view that all boasting is "dangerous." Stanley, Boasting, 48–49, thinks the necessity is a divine one, and yet
can Paul condemn the boasting of his opponents without engaging in the same practice? This he attempts to do this through the "fool's speech" of 2 Corinthians 11:1–12:13.10

Following a long and pointed introduction (11:1–21), the fool's speech proper begins with Paul's claims to an impeccable Jewish heritage (v. 22; cf. Phil 3:4b–6); on this count, his opponents have no advantage over him. In verse 23, however, Paul takes a sharp turn with his claim that he is a "better minister of Christ" (i.e., apostle) than they, backing this up with a detailed list of progressively worsening privations (vv. 23–27).11 One imagines that this list is the opposite of the kinds of things that the opponents have boasted in, but Paul's list is intended, in part, to parody that of his opponents. His list concludes with references to his anxiety for the "weak" and those "caused to stumble" (i.e., into sin, vv. 28–29)—a not-so-subtle hint to the readers about their condition.12 By means of this list, the charge against Paul—that he has a Paul says it "yields no advantage" (οὐ σοφόν), qualified by Stanley to mean "no spiritual advantage" (49, emphasis original). Lambrecht, "Dangerous Boasting," 325–346, argues, correctly, that all "boasting" is unprofitable and is entered into by Paul here only temporarily and with serious reservations.

10 The "fool's speech" proper begins in 11:22 and consists of three units (11:22–29; 11:30–33; 12:1–10).

11 The unit has been compared with the "catalogues of affliction" (Ger. Peristasenkataloge) found in both Hellenistic and Jewish literature. 2 Corinthians has four such catalogues, 4:7–12; 6:4–10; 11:22–29; 12:10; cf. 1 Cor 4:8–13; Phil 4:11–12; Rom 8:35–39. For comparisons between the "catalogues of affliction" in Hellenistic and Jewish literature, and those found in Paul see Hans Dieter Betz, Der Apostel Paulus und die sokratische Tradition (BHT 45; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1972); Jan Lambrecht, S.J., Second Corinthians (SP 8; Collegeville, Minn.: Michael Glazier/Liturgical, 1999), 115–118; Schnelle, Apostle Paul, 246–247, esp. n. 32; Anthony C. Thiselton, The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich./Carlisle: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 2000), 365–368. Catalogues of afflictions were used by Cynic and Stoic philosophers, not to highlight "weaknesses," but emphasize accomplishments. Forbes, "Comparison," 19, is probably correct when he notes that the list in 11:23–27 was constructed to mock the "catalogues" of the "false apostles." Scott B. Andrews, "Too Weak Not to Lead: The Form and Function of 2 Cor 11.23b–33," NTS 41 (1995): 263–276, argues that social status is tied up in this comparison; this has rightly been rejected by Jan Lambrecht, S.J., "Strength in Weakness: A Reply to Scott B. Andrews' Exegesis of 2 Cor 11:23b–33," NTS 43 (1997): 285–290.

12 Forbes, "Comparison," 19. Forbes (20) also suggests that Paul's use of "stumbling" (σκανδάλιζεται) in v. 29 and his intense response (πυροδοτεί) may point to the church's and Paul's participation in the great eschatological trial (cf. 1 Cor 3:10–15). This comports well with the overall eschatological context of Paul's
weak physical presence (10:10)—is subverted into a virtue; Paul is determined to boast only of his weaknesses, and this before God (vv. 30–31)!

The final two sections in the fool's speech (i.e., 11:32–33 and 12:1–10) continue to subvert the opponents' boast by providing humiliating examples of Paul's weakness. The precise meaning of the first example—the "Damascus wall" incident—is disputed by scholars, but is probably meant to highlight Paul's cowardice (perhaps playing into the hands of his opponents).\(^\text{13}\)

The final example of Paul's weaknesses (12:1–6), which is integrally related to his thorn in the flesh experience (12:7–10),\(^\text{14}\) begins in a promising way for his ministry outlined in ch. VIII.B.2 above, and highlights the opponents' over-realised eschatology.

13 Scholars also disagree over whether the two incidents (the Damascus wall and the heavenly vision) are intended to be read together or separately. The incidents are recalled in chronological order and there are linguistic connections; see Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, Mich./Milton Keynes: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 2005), 816. Russell P. Spittler, "The Limits of Ecstasy: An Exegesis of 2 Corinthians 12:1–10," in *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: In Honor of Merrill C. Tenney* (ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1975), 259–266, illustrates the difficulty of all interpreters on this issue. At one point Spittler says the Damascus wall incident is the completion of the *Peristasenkatalog* with 12:1–10 as a new "charge" (260) and at another that 12:1–10 "continues and sharpens […] the same argument as that of the *Peristasenkatalog*" (262).

The Damascus wall incident (11:30–33) has been compared by Edwin A. Judge, "The Conflict of Educational Aims in NT Thought," *JCE* 9 (1966): 44–45, to the *corona muralis* ("wall crown"), a bravery award given to the first soldier over an enemy city wall; Furnish, *2 Corinthians*, 542, summarises Judge's ancient sources. Harris, *Second Corinthians*, 824, questions whether the readers would have grasped this allusion given that the word "first" is absent in 2 Cor 11:33. See also the comments of Winter, *Philo and Paul*, 235–236, esp. n. 134. Others are more generous to Judge's view, e.g., Furnish, *2 Corinthians*, 542; Lambrecht, *2 Corinthians*, 193.

14 Both parts of this unit (vv. 1–6, 7–10) possess the same structure: a vision of the Lord (vv. 1–4, 7–9a) followed by comments upon that vision (vv. 5–6, 9b–10). The consensus that Paul refers to two separate visions at two separate times (vv. 2–4, 7–9) has been questioned by Paula R. Goeder, *Only the Third Heaven? 2 Corinthians 12.1–10 and Heavenly Ascent* (LNTS 313; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998), 165–211. Goeder argues that Paul's heavenly ascent was an unsuccessful one in that he only made it to the third heaven at which point he was struck by an "angel of Satan" in his desire to rise higher (i.e., "boast"). The "weakness" he learned was that visions are unnecessary in the new dispensation. Unfortunately, Goeder succeeds in merging the two events (heavenly ascent and thorn in the flesh revelation) only by regarding the connecting vv. 5–7a as "linking verses" following Ulrich Heckel, *Kraft in Schwachheit. Untersuchungen zu 2. Kor 10-13* (WUNT 2/56; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993), 309.
power-hungry audience as Paul speaks of "visions and revelations of the Lord" that occurred fourteen years ago (v. 1). Perhaps similar mystical experiences had occurred fourteen years ago (v. 1).

Too deep a wedge should not be driven between the objective and subjective genitive of κορύφου; so also Andrew T. Lincoln, "Paul the Visionary: The Setting and Significance of the Rapture to Paradise in II Corinthians XII.1–10," NTS 25 (1978): 205–206.


The mystical elements of Paul's relationship with Christ, including his visions, continue to spark interest among scholars, e.g., Ashton, Religion of Paul, 113–151, who includes a review of the classic work of Albert Schweitzer, The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle (trans. W. Montgomery; London: A. & C. Black, 1930); Stanley, Boasting, 44–52. Paul intriguingly distances himself from this vision/revelation by speaking about "a man in Christ." Perhaps he is recalling how he experienced it (as an "out of body" revelation); so Dunn, Jesus and the Spirit, 214–215; Thrall, Second Corinthians, 782; Thrall, "Paul's Journey to Paradise," 352. He is most likely shielding himself from any accusation of boasting, the overall theme of the fool's speech; so David E. Garland, 2 Corinthians (NAC 29; Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman, 1999), 511; Lincoln, "Paul the Visionary," 208–209; Harris, Second Corinthians, 835. The suggestion of Betz, Paulus und die sokratische Tradition, 84–92 (as cited in Garland, 2 Corinthians, 511), that Paul parodies the experience of the opponents, is less true here than in the Peristasenkatalog of 11:22–27. This is no imaginary tale; Paul says that he experienced this vision. The same may be said of Betz' view that the "thorn in the flesh" episode is a parody, as referred to by Gooder, 2 Corinthians 12.1–10, 192–195.
been offered by his opponents as evidence of their direct relationship with the divine being, validating their authority (cf. 5:13)?

However, even though Paul says his visions were of a superior kind (ὑπερβολή), they are of no profit in measuring an apostle (12:1, 6). After all, how can an apostle boast in that which God governs? Having removed all false thinking about boasting, Paul is now ready to speak of that in which he does boast and how this affects his ministry as an apostle (12:7–10).

C. Exegesis

7 καὶ τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων διό  ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι, ἐδόθη μοι σκόλωψ τῇ σαρκί, ἄγγελος σατάνα, ἵνα με κολαφίζῃ, ἵνα μὴ ὑπεραίρωμαι.

8 ὑπὲρ τούτου τρίς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα ἵνα ἀποστῇ ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ.

9 καὶ εἰρηκέν μοι: ἄρκει σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἡ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται.

18 Garland, 2 Corinthians, 508.
19 Furnish, 2 Corinthians, 546.
20 Throughout this episode (i.e., vv. 1–6) and the one to follow (vv. 7–10) Paul subtly emphasizes that God was in control. God "snatched […] this man up" (the passive of ἀρπάξειν is used twice), God provided the incomprehensible (καὶ ἐκουσθή ἄγγελον ἁλῆσαι) and embargoed (ὥστε ἐξὸν ἀνθρώπῳ λαλῆσαι) revelation; therefore God—and not apostles (false or true)—should gain the glory.
22 διό is omitted by many witnesses and not a few important ones (𝔓46 Ψ 1881 Μ lat sa; Irab). It should be retained, however, as its omission is more easily accounted for than its inclusion (𝔓 A B F G 0243. 33. 81. 1739 pc syh). See the exegesis for further comments.
23 This repeated purpose clause is omitted by important witnesses (𝔓* A D F G 33. 629* pc lat; Irab), but has strong support (𝔓46 Κ2 B 1̃ B 2̃ Ψ 0243. 0278. 1739. (1881) Μ lat a sy co; Cyp Ambst). The repetition is for emphasis in the unit. See Harris, Second Corinthians, 829 n. m, for detailed argument.
24 μου is added by Κ* A D 1 E K L P Ψ 0243. 0278. 33. 1739. 1881 Μ sy bopt; Irarm, and omitted by Ψ̃vid Κ* A D* F G 424c lat sa bopt; Irab. The latter witnesses are not only more substantial but the reading they support is the more difficult one.
In the lead up to the thorn in the flesh incident, Paul has raised and dashed the hopes of those who compel him to boast like a fool (2 Cor 12:1–6). Now Paul removes his mask and speaks plainly about his ministry (2 Cor 12:7–10).

The thorn in the flesh episode consists of three movements: (1) the imposition of the thorn in the flesh and Paul's appeal to the Lord for its removal (vv. 7–8); (2) the response of the Lord to Paul (v. 9a); and, (3) the implications of the Lord's response for Paul's ministry (vv. 9b–10).

Nevertheless, since "power" must match "my grace" in the rhythm of the verse, the mou is understood in any case.

25 There is "slightly stronger support" (Harris, Second Corinthians, 830 n. p) for the mou to be included, but it is implied in any case.

1. The Thorn in the Flesh and Paul's Plea for Its Removal (2 Cor 12:7–8)

In 2 Corinthians 12:7–8, Paul speaks of a personal event that occurred after and as a consequence of the journey to heaven recorded in verses 2–4. In verses 5–6, Paul returns the reader to the theme of boasting (cf. v. 1), indicating that he could boast about ecstatic experiences without exaggerating (like his opponents do?), but he chooses only to boast of his weaknesses (cf. vv. 9b–10). A specific weakness is now presented. Because of the potential of this (and other) vision(s) to become a source of pride (v. 7a, τῇ ὑπερβολῇ τῶν ἀποκαλύψεων), says Paul, there was given (by God, aor. pass., ἔδωκεν) to him a "thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan" (σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκὶ, ἁγγελὸς σατανᾶ). The divine hand is also expressed in verses 9b–10 through διό and ἵνα clauses. The purpose of the "thorn in the flesh" (a now-completed infliction, aorist tense) was that Paul's pride be kept permanently in check.

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27 The syntactical relationship between vv. 6 and 7 is not entirely clear; see comments on textual variants above. If v. 6b is allowed to continue through to v. 7a, then a new sentence can begin in v. 7b with διό; so NA; UBS; NRSV; Furnish, 2 Corinthians, 528; Ralph P. Martin, 2 Corinthians (WBC 40; Waco, Tex.: Word, 1986), 389. The καί at the beginning of v. 7a would then take a copulative, epexegetical, or ascensive meaning. This does blunt the thrust of v. 6, yet resolves the difficult position of διό in v. 7. If a new sentence begins at verse 7 with καί, and the dative τῇ ὑπερβολῇ is given a causal meaning (rather than dative of respect), then the διό must be seen as redundant (or an "unemphatic anticipation of ἵνα," Bultmann, 2 Corinthians, 224)—hence its omission by significant MSS. Yet the overall weighting of texts and the difficulty of the awkward particle favour its retention; so Akin, "Triumphalism," 137; Barnett, 2 Corinthians, 567; Barrett, Second Corinthians, 314; Bultmann, 2 Corinthians, 224; Harris, Second Corinthians, 851–853; Jean Héring, The Second Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians (trans. A. W. Heathcote and P. J. Allcock; London: Epworth, 1967), 92; Lambrecht, 2 Corinthians, 202; Frank J. Matera, II Corinthians: A Commentary (NTL; Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2003), 275; Thrall, Second Corinthians, 2:802–805. On balance, it is better to begin a new sentence with v. 7 and allow v. 6 to complete the comment of v. 5, which it explains (γὰρ). The καί of v. 7 introduces a conclusion from what precedes, "and so"; see BDAG, 495, καί, 1.b.ξ. Barnett, 2 Corinthians, 567 n. 5, says that the καί at the start of v. 7 is explicative.

28 The frequent use of personal pronouns in vv. 7–10 is notable, not only with reference to Paul but also to "the Lord."

29 The noun ὑπερβολή means "excess, extraordinary quality/character," BDAG, 1032. Three of its other six NT uses are also found in 2 Cor 1:8; 4:7, 17.

30 The plural refers either to the revelations he had in the vision just spoken of in vv. 2–4 or to others he had had previously. See discussion of this point in Barnett, 2 Corinthians, 567–568.

31 A locative dative ("in the flesh") and not dative of disadvantage ("for the flesh"). The translation "stake" is possible for σκόλοψ but unlikely in this context; so Gerhard Delling, "σκόλοψ," TDNT 7: 412.
(Ἰνα μη ὑπεραίρωμαι, present tense) through the "buffeting" of an "angel of Satan" (Ἰνα με κολαφίζῃ, again, present tense). The ongoing purpose of the thorn was Paul's humility—but this is a conclusion he came to afterwards.

The identity of the "thorn in the flesh" has remained elusive to scholars. Most consider it to be some kind of chronic physical ailment. This accounts for it being a thorn in the flesh. Others consider the phrase a metaphor for Paul's opponents (cf. 11:14–15, where Paul implies his opponents are "ministers [of Satan]"). The first view is supported by the verb κολαφίζῃ, which, being a present subjunctive, looks at Paul's experience inwardly, as he experiences it. However, that Paul also identifies it as an "angel of Satan" means that the consequence of the thorn—that is, the hampering or cessation of his apostolic ministry (cf. uses of "Satan" or similar in 2 Cor 2:11; 4:4)—was of equal importance to him. The thorn in the flesh, therefore, was a physical impairment that threatened the success of Paul's apostolic ministry. It is important that both the physical and the spiritual/calling aspects of the thorn in the flesh be kept in view.

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32 Echoes of Job 1–2 may be heard at this point; that righteous servant was handed over to the Satan's determination, nearly to the point of death. As with the afflictions of the Peristasenkatalog of 11:22–29, Paul had no choice in this torment. As Barnett, 2 Corinthians, 567, concludes: "It was God's will for Paul."

33 Garland, 2 Corinthians, 519, suggests the "thorn" was well known to the Corinthians and does not need defining; indeed it may have been the reason for the opponents' accusation in 10:10. This suggestion is attractive, but cannot be proven. Garland's case would be strengthened if the text said, "my thorn in the flesh."


35 Campbell, "Verbal Aspect in the Non-Indicative," 77. Those who see Paul's Peristasenkataloge as evidence for robustness (e.g., Martin, 2 Corinthians, 415) forget that the ailment initially prevented him from carrying out his ministry. Paul is going back in time in 2 Cor 12:7, before he began to consider his afflictions as items of "boasting."

36 Stanley, Boasting, 55

37 A choice on whether it is the thorn or the angel of Satan that Paul wishes removed is difficult. Two arguments have been put forward for it to be Satan: (1) if Satan is seen as the enemy of Paul (e.g., 2 Cor 2:11), then his angel could be the unnamed object of the verb ἀποστή; and, (2) the verb ἀφίσταναι usually takes a personal object in Paul's writings. However, the two elements (the thorn and the pummelling) are in apposition in v. 7, with σκόλοψ in the leading role. The physical nature of the thorn (and pummelling) fits better with the Peristasenkataloge found throughout the
In the midst of this physical and personal anguish Paul "pleaded with the Lord three times about this that he might remove [it] from me" (12:8; ὅπερ τοῦτον τρίς τὸν κύριον παρεκάλεσα ἵνα ἀποστῇ ἀπ’ ἐμοῦ). "Three times" (τρίς) appears too precise for some, but Delling's suggestion, based on Greco-Roman and Jewish sources, is sound: to petition a god three times is sufficient to be assured of a final decision. The aorist tense of the verb also implies finality (παρεκάλεσα): Paul's thorn was there to stay.

Paul's request for help (παρεκάλεσα; cf. Matt 26:53) to the risen Jesus on this occasion rather than to "God" or the "Father" may be grounded in the fact that it was the "Lord" who called him on the Damascus Road (Gal 1:16; cf. 1 Cor 15:8; Phil 3:12; Acts 9:17, 18) and empowered him for this ministry (by his Spirit, Rom 15:19; 2 Cor 12:12; cf. 2 Cor 4:6; 3:16–18)—a ministry now under threat. It is also possible that Paul is following an early Christian practice (evident in the Gospels and the book of Acts; e.g., 7:59, 60) whereby petitions for healing were directed to Jesus (even using the verb παρακαλεῖν on some occasions, e.g., Mark 1:40; 5:23; 6:56; 7:32; 8:22; etc.; cf. James 5:14–15).

Parallels between the Gethsemane prayer of Jesus (cf. Mark 14:32–42 par. Matt 26:36–46; cf. ch. IV, above) and this prayer of Paul are frequently made, especially the point that both prayed three times and did not receive what they

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38 The "Lord" (κύριος) referred to in v. 8 is the Lord Jesus and not the Lord God. This view is supported by the conclusions he draws from the response in vv. 9–10 (the "power of Christ"; "on behalf of Christ"). Petitions to Christ are not common in the NT (and especially in Paul); cf. Rom 10:9, 10, 14, 15; 1 Cor 16:22; note also Paul's response to the appearance of the risen Jesus on the Damascus Road in Acts 9:5; 22:8; 26:15; cf. Gal 1:16.

39 Barrett, Second Corinthians, 316, argues that τρίς means "earnest and repeated" prayer. So also Calvin and Chrysostom, according to Martin, 2 Corinthians, 417.


41 So P. É. B. Allo, Saint Paul: Seconde épître aux Corinthiens (EBib; Paris: Beauchesne, 1956), 312, cited in Martin, 2 Corinthians, 418.


requested. There are differences between the episodes, however: Jesus requested not only that the cup be removed from him, but also that God's will be done. He faced an imminent onslaught of evil and death, and he received no "word" from above. Paul did not use the same address of God found on Jesus' lips in the Markan Gethsemane record, even though he is aware it was used by the early Gentile Christian communities ("Abba! Father!" in Mark 14:36; Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6). The parallels are therefore more likely to be incidental than deliberate. The prayer pattern of both Jesus and Paul was probably received from the traditions of Judaism and signified the finality of their circumstance: both prayed without success and yet persevered in submitting to God. At the end of his prayers, however, Paul received a word from the Lord whom he had addressed.

2. The Lord's Word to Paul (2 Cor 12:9a)
In verse 9a, Paul quotes a revelation spoken to him by the Lord: ἐξῆκεν σοι ἡ χάρις μου, ἢ γὰρ δύναμις ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ τελεῖται. The Lord's affirmation forms the climax of Paul's defence in 2 Corinthians. Its affirmatory tone contrasts strongly with Paul's resignation in his prayer of verse 8 and can be seen as belated response to it. Paul's careful choice of verb tenses appears to go against this conclusion, however. It will be recalled that Paul's use of the aorist parekavlesa in verse 8 probably indicates a completed event without remainder. In verse 9, the use of the perfect tense εἰρηκέν ("he said—and continues to say") probably signifies the beginning of a new era. It reflects Paul's subsequent interpretation of the revelation of the Lord (vv. 9b–10). The message was a new application of the gospel that had ongoing implications (hence present tense verbs ἐρκεί, τελεῖται). The openness of the perfect and present tenses of verse 9a contrast with the finality of the aorist tense of Paul's thrice-uttered plea in verse 8. The Lord who said No to his request also said Yes to his thorn and his future ministry. Indeed, the Lord's word in verse 9a is aimed not at the prayers of verse 8 but at their presupposition: that without the removal of this thorn Paul's ministry would be fruitless. This conclusion by Paul was wrong. The Lord could remove it but instead wants Paul to continue on with it in his grace. The new era does not bypass the old, however, but embraces it. The thorn and its consequences continue (κολαφίζω, present tense) so that Paul's pride might continue

44 Barnett, 2 Corinthians, 572.
45 So, e.g., Barrett, Second Corinthians, 316.
to be kept in check (ἳνα μὴ ὑπεραρρωμαί, present tense), and Christ's grace might continue abound (ἀρκεῖ, τελείται, present tenses). Yet this "grace" does not begin now for it is the same grace that was available to Paul at the Damascus Road.

Turning to the details of the verse, the Lord's word to Paul in verse 9 is composed of two matching parts joined by a γάρ.46

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ἀρκεῖ} & \quad \text{[A]} \\
\text{σοι} & \quad \text{[B]} \\
\text{ἡ χάρις μου} & \quad \text{[C]} \\
\text{ἡ γάρ δύναμις} & \quad \text{[C']} \\
\text{ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ} & \quad \text{[B']} \\
\text{τελεῖται} & \quad \text{[A']} \\
\end{align*}
\]

At the centre of the chiasm [C, C'] ἡ χάρις μου ("my grace") and ἡ [...] δύναμις "power" are equated.47 The Lord's unconditional and sacrificial love enables the endurance of all things (2 Cor 5:14; cf. Rom 5:2–5; 8:38–39), and is offered to human beings through a weak apostle in the proclamation of the Christ event (cf. 2 Cor 6:1 as a summary of 5:18–21).48 The power and freedom from limitation that Paul craved in his prayer is found in Christ.

In the next layer of the chiasm [B, B'], σοι ("for you") corresponds with ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ ("in [the midst of] weakness"). The "you" empowered by the grace of Christ is the weakened apostle. The word "weakness" was used pejoratively by Paul's opponents (10:10) and then taken up by Paul as a theme word to describe his afflictions (11:30; 12:5, 9b and 10). The phrase ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ is in effect a realm in which the Lord's powerful grace operates and embraces all afflictions endured by Christ's servants, whether of a physical or spiritual nature. It was in weakness and through weakness that Paul heard Christ's promise and it is still in weakness that he continues to experience Christ's grace and power. The thorn in the flesh has become a cipher for all weakness—physical and spiritual. It stands at the beginning of all his afflictions and explains why Paul's ministry takes the shape it does. It is for this reason a fitting climax to his argument against those who diminish his apostleship.

46 Harris, Second Corinthians, 862, notes that the second part of the verse is offered as the basis of the first. However, the simplicity of the promise, and its chiastic structure, are probably of greater weight in interpreting its meaning. The two halves build on one another rather than explain one another.

47 The "grace" of Christ refers here not to his gift of apostleship to Paul (e.g., Rom 1:5; 12:3; 1 Cor 15:10), but to his empowering love that encompasses all God's dealings with humanity (2 Cor 8:9; 13:13); contra Klawek, Das Gebet zu Jesus, 69.

48 Barrett, Second Corinthians, 316–317.
The outer ring of the chiasm [A, A'] grounds the presence of Christ's grace and power in the past gift of Christ and the future expectation of fulfilment. The first line [A] of the promise says that Christ's grace "is sufficient" for Paul. As noted above, this must mean that the risen Christ—who commissioned Paul on the Damascus Road (cf. 1 Cor 15:8–10; Gal 1:15–16)—has already granted him the effective power to continue as his apostle no matter what the hindrances might be (note the present tense of ἀρκεί; cf. 1 Cor 13:7; Phil 4:13). His death and resurrection—which form the heart of Paul's message (cf. 2 Cor 5:16–6:1)—are powerful in any and every circumstance. For Paul, therefore, apostolic ministry becomes a question of trusting Christ for all things (cf. Phil 4:6–7, 13, 19; 1:6).

The second verb (τελείται, present passive) highlights the way by which the power of Christ at work in a weakened Paul will lead on to a glorious conclusion. In the New Testament, the verb τελείν generally means "to bring to an end, finish" (e.g., Matt 7:2), or "to accomplish, fulfil" (e.g., Luke 12:50; 18:31; 22:37; Acts 13:29). The passive form of the verb found here implies that it is God's purposes that are being perfected in weakness. The grace and power of Christ, therefore, are not only sufficient to meet Paul's present needs (ἀρκεί), but are the means by which the purposes of God are being unfolded: and all this through the apostle's weakness!

The salvation plan of God—of which his Spirit is the instrument of application (2 Cor 3:3, 6, 17, 18) and the gospel is the trumpet (2 Cor 2:14–17; 4:1–6)—is being accomplished in a form contrary to all human expectation. The critique levelled against Paul by his opponents has been shown for what it is: human boasting that is out of step with Christ's pattern.

Did this revelation from the Lord about how his grace is effective and how his purposes are being accomplished remove the necessity for prayer in Paul's view? Paul's prayers for others and his exhortations to pray found throughout all his letters suggest that the answer is No. Indeed, a hint may be found in the consequences Paul

49 The use of ἀρκείν here is to be distinguished from the earlier uses of the ἱκαν- stem in 2 Cor (2:16; 3:5, 6), which centre on Paul's qualification as an apostle. Here the supply of grace is not to qualify him but to enable him to fulfil his commission; apostleship is not about competency but entrusting oneself to God's love in Christ. What Jesus promises here is not for Paul alone but for all readers, ancient and modern; Barnett, 2 Corinthians, 574.
50 BDAG, 997–998, τελέω.
51 Fee, God's Empowering Presence, 353, suggests that "power" in verse 9 is nothing less than the effective working of God's Spirit.
draws from the Lord's promise that his prayers were affected in the opposite
direction. This hint will prove important in answering the question of whether Paul
continued to pray for himself after the thorn in the flesh incident (section D of this
chapter).

3. The Implications of Jesus' Promise for Paul's Ministry (2 Cor 12:9b–10)
In verses 9b–10 Paul draws two implications (9b, oôv, 10a, διό) from Jesus' promise
in verse 9a. Firstly—and with direct reference to his opponents and their
supporters—he says he would rather "boast" of his weaknesses (i.e., his afflictions as
detailed throughout the letter, 1:8–10; 4:7–9; 6:4–6; 11:23b–27; 12:10), than in
successful or impressive displays of "power." The reason for this rather radical
preference for weakness is, "so that the power of Christ might dwell upon me" (ίνα
ἐπισκηνώσῃ ἐπ' ἑμὲ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Χριστοῦ). By this clause Paul may mean
that he prefers weakness so that he can experience the presence of Christ in his
service of Christ. Another view is that Paul prefers weakness because it means that
his afflictions might be used by God (presumably by his Spirit) to show Christ to
others. The second view fits well within 2 Corinthians and elsewhere, where the

52 In the first part of Paul's response (v. 9b) the comparison (μᾶλλον) requires
completion. He says that he will "gladly boast in my weaknesses rather than […] so
that the power of Christ might come to rest upon me." Does Paul mean that he
would rather boast in his weaknesses than have them removed, or that he would
rather boast in his weaknesses than boast in things which do not permit the power of
Christ to rest upon him (i.e., those things that his opponents boast in, such as the
revelations of vv. 2–4)? Akin, "Triumphalism," 141; Furnish, 2 Corinthians, 531;
Harris, Second Corinthians, 865; Lambrecht, 2 Corinthians, 204; Plummer, 2
Corinthians, 335, support the former view; Barnett, 2 Corinthians, 575; Barrett,
Second Corinthians, 317; Martin, 2 Corinthians, 421; Thrall, Second Corinthians,
2:826, (tentatively), support the latter view. Thrall, Second Corinthians, 2:826, notes
that Black, Apostle of Weakness, 156, has both options! The second alternative has
in its favour the fact that in verses 9b–10 Paul is clearly returning to the theme of
"boasting," which dominated the "fool's speech" (11:1–12:10) and its introduction
(esp. 10:12–18), rather than continuing his own discussion about keeping his "thorn."
53 The verb ἐπισκηνώνυμον—found only here in the Greek Bible—has links to the
presence of God that took up residence in the tabernacle (e.g., Exod 40:34; cf. 25:8–
9). In the NT this image is used of the incarnation of the Word (John 1:14) and the
future dwelling of God with his people and he with them (Rev 7:14, etc.), both
powerful adaptations.
54 Wilhelm Michaelis, "σκηνή," TDNT 7: 386–387. This alternative is not to be
thought of in a selfish way but for the strengthening needed to endure. However, the
view does leave open the suggestion that an additional indwelling of Christ to that
found at the Damascus Road may be found in suffering.
Paul sees himself as a kind of conduit of divine benefit. In 2 Corinthians 4, Paul says his God-enabled endurance of afflictions makes the "life of Jesus […] visible (φανερωθῇ) in our bodies" (4:10; cf. "in our mortal flesh," v. 11, NRSV).

When Jesus "becomes visible," life occurs by the Spirit (3:16–18; 4:5–6; cf. 1 Cor 2:13, 16).55 Presumably, by the verb φανερωθῇ ("becomes visible") Paul does not mean it occurs through bare power apart from his proclamation of Christ (cf. 2 Cor 2:14–16). Rather, he means that the power of Christ effects salvation or renewal (3:18; 5:17) as the gospel is heard through the weak and poorly-spoken apostle.

Paul's description of the progress of the gospel while he is in prison (Phil 1:12–14) is an example of presence of Jesus at work in weakness, including the strife intended by those who should have known better (1:15–18). Another important element, assumed in 2 Corinthians 12, is evident here. In the weakness experienced in a Roman prison,56 Paul does not consider the life-giving proclamation of the gospel as the only goal: he also wants eschatological vindication for himself.

Towards the achievement of this outcome Paul invites the Philippians to participate through their prayers with the expectation that the Lord will supply his Spirit to him (1:19).57 Ultimately, Paul believes that the power of the risen Christ will rest upon him at the Parousia (cf. Phil 3:10–11). The connection of weakness/suffering, petition, and the present and ultimate eschatological power of Christ are deeply integrated in Pauline thought and will be taken up in the final section of this chapter.

Paul's second application of Jesus' promise (2 Cor 12:10) takes the form of a final Peristasenkatalog (διὸ εὐδοκῶ ἐν ἁγιείᾳ, ἐν ὀβρεσίν, ἐν ἀνάγκαις,

55 Thrall, Second Corinthians, 2:828. Does this "process" occur only in the apostle, or is it one that is generally true for all believers? In spite of the reservations of Gerald O. O'Collins, "Power Made Perfect in Weakness: 2 Cor 12:9–10," CBQ 33 (1971): 534–536, and, Thrall, Second Corinthians, 831, the binding of the readers' sufferings with their apostle in 2 Cor 1:3–7 leads to the latter conclusion. When the believer suffers afflictions for Christ's sake and in his place, then, when the gospel is announced by that person a display of divine power may be found there; so Jan Lambrecht, S.J., "The Nekrosis of Jesus: Ministry and Suffering in 2 Cor 4,7–15," in L'Apôtre Paul: Personnalité, Style, et Conception du Ministère (BETL 73; ed. A. Vanhoye; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1986), 142–143. Death and resurrection are bound together, but in contrary forms to what the world expects (cf. 1 Cor 1:18–25).

56 The provenance of Philippians depends in part upon the letter's integrity. If its integrity is assumed, Rome remains a more likely provenance than either Caesarea or Ephesus; so Bockmuehl, Philippines, 25–32; O'Brien, Philippians, 19–26; Moisés Silva, Philippians (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2005), 5–7.

57 O'Brien, Philippians, 109–110.
ἐν διωγμοῖς καὶ στενοχωρίαις, ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ) that concludes with the explanation, "for whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι). Paul here issues his motto. It not only echoes the promise of Christ (v. 9a), but also the whole section (10:1–12:13). Paul refuses to boast about his own physical, emotional, or spiritual strength (12:5), but gladly boasts in the opposite (11:23–27), knowing that he will fulfill his apostolic ministry in a faithful and powerful way, despite the interpretations of others (10:10).

4. Conclusions from 2 Corinthians 12:7–10
Second Corinthians 12:7–10 has been thought to support the apparent absence of Paul's prayers for himself and his rare encouragement to others to petition God for their own needs. The above investigation demonstrated that the unit forms the climax of Paul's argument on the validity of his apostolic ministry in the light of his "style." It tells of a time when Paul had been struck down (by the Lord) with a condition that threatened his apostolic ministry and in which he experienced the ceaseless torment of Satan. After appealing directly to the Lord for healing he concluded that this was not to be. At the depths of incapacity and helplessness Paul received a permanently valid promise from the Lord to the effect that it is through afflictions that the power of Christ is brought into reality and the purposes of God are achieved. This word governed his apostolic existence and his refusal to employ either miracles or rhetoric to demonstrate his apostolic validity.

The analysis of the relationship between verses 8 and 9 showed that the Lord's word was probably not meant as an answer to Paul's prayer, but to the presupposition that lay underneath it: that without the removal of the thorn, ministry was impossible. Christ's word to Paul was that his appearance to and commission of him on the Damascus Road as the risen Lord—his forgiving and perfecting grace—meant that Paul's ministry would accomplish the divine plan of salvation no matter what the condition of his servant (including the "thorn in the flesh"). For Paul, this revelation could not be alleviated by either miracle or rhetoric.

58 Furnish, 2 Corinthians, 551.
59 Harris, Second Corinthians, 867.
60 Plummer, 2 Corinthians, 356.
61 Here εὐδοκέων ἐν means not "rejoice in" nor "be content with" but "take pleasure in"; see BDAG, 404; εὐδοκέω, 2.b; so also Harris, Second Corinthians, 866; Thrall, Second Corinthians, 2:829–830.
62 Barnett, 2 Corinthians, 577.
63 Thrall, Second Corinthians, 830.
of Christ inaugurated a new era in his ministry; the non-removal of the thorn continued as a witness to Christ's grace and became a cipher for all his afflictions.

The question of whether 2 Corinthians 12:7–10 portrayed Paul as eschewing prayer for his own needs or that he minimised petitionary prayer for self can only be asked as a consequential question and not one that arises directly from the text. The implications Paul draws (vv. 9b–10), however, do not support this conclusion. Initial investigations suggest that Paul now viewed his afflictions as opportunities for Christ's saving power to become visible in him by those to whom he proclaimed the grace of Christ in the gospel. An example of this was given from Philippians 1. The following section is an attempt to extend this work further in 2 Corinthians with respect to the question of Paul's prayers for himself.

D. Did Paul Pray for Himself?

In answering the question of whether or not Paul prayed for himself and/or recommended prayer for self, it is important to recall the conclusion to the survey of Pauline prayer in Chapter VIII.B.2: Paul placed petition as the primary weapon available to the Christian in the present eschatological crisis (Eph 6:18; Col 4:2–4; 1 Thess 5:16–22; 2 Thess 3:1–2). Petitions are, of course, to be offered not only in the midst of extreme distress, but about any matter of concern for the Christian (Phil 4:6–7). It is God's delight to provide for his children (Phil 4:19). Moreover, petition is linked to thanksgiving, which looks for God to answer prayers in accordance with his riches in Christ. It would be unusual in the light of these fundamental principles of prayer that Paul would refuse to pray for himself. Although Paul warns believers about self-centredness (e.g, Phil 2:3) one does not get the impression that he had an agenda against prayer for self.

Yet beyond these general comments, is there any evidence that Paul prayed for his own needs or said that this was permissible? An initial answer to this question was offered in the exegesis of 2 Corinthians 12:9b–10 above. In drawing out the consequences of the promise of the Lord (v. 9a), Paul said that he would boast of his weaknesses so that the presence of Christ may dwell upon him. It was concluded above that—in the context of the proclamation of the gospel (v. 9b; cf. 4:7, 10, 11)—this purpose expressed the hope that Christ would become visible to others in and through his afflictions. Philippians 1:12–19 was used as an example of this principle.
in action and the presence of prayer in that context also suggests a Pauline pattern. The intention now is to investigate further Paul's afflictions recorded in 2 Corinthians in search of evidence of his continued prayers for self. If evidence can be found that Paul prayed for himself in afflictions, then the argument that he did not pray for his own needs falls to the ground.

The evidence for Paul praying for himself in the midst of afflictions is neither as plenteous nor as firm as one would like, but, since it has not been put down in detail anywhere else, it deserves to see the light of day here. The main piece of evidence that Paul prayed for himself is found in 2 Corinthians 1:8–11. Here Paul speaks about an affliction that occurred in Asia in which he was so unbearably crushed that he despaired of life and sensed within himself the "sentence of death"—and yet he was rescued (ἐξρήσασθαι) by God from this unbearable hardship. At the close of the unit, Paul says that the affliction came about so that he might learn to trust (once again) not in himself, but in the God who raises the dead. He then adds that the God "who rescued us from so deadly a peril will continue to rescue us; on him we have put our hope that he will rescue us again" (v. 10, NRSV, emphasis added). 64 The double use of the verb "will rescue" (ῥέσσεται) probably points to Paul's expectation of eternal salvation but it is not exhausted by this referent; it must also include temporal rescues like the one he has just recalled in verses 8–10. God will rescue him: he is that kind of God. Based on this example of God's deliverance of their apostle, Paul invites the Corinthians to strive with him in prayer for future rescues so that thanksgiving might be given by many as a result (v. 11).

Second Corinthians 1:8–10 refers to a rescue from a danger of which the Corinthians were ignorant until they had read this letter (note esp. v. 8), so they had not prayed about it. Now Paul exhorts them to join him (συνυποποιηθευτων) in praying for him. It is reasonable to conclude that, since they are being asked to join him in future prayers for rescue, that Paul had prayed about his earlier rescue in Asia. Of course, it is possible that he did not pray for his rescue, but that would mean that

64 On this text, see O'Brien, Introductory Thanksgivings, 248–254. A. E. Harvey, Renewal Through Suffering: A Study of 2 Corinthians (SNTW; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1996), argues that the "affliction" in Asia (1:8–10) was the cause of Paul's theology of affliction and not an illustration of it. By making this a fixed point, he forces other evidence, including the "thorn in the flesh" episode, into his shape. It is better to see a number of key events (esp. his Damascus Road experience) reinforcing the central platform of Paul's ministry and not just one.
Paul is asking them to do something that was new to him as well. However, the mention of thanksgiving as the goal of a future petition in verse 11 (see ch. VIII.B.4, above) implies that it was the goal of his own earlier petition for the rescue in Asia (vv. 8–10). Paul wants the Corinthians to participate with him through prayer in his future afflictions and to join him in giving thanks when God brings about a rescue (cf. Phil 1:18–19).

Petitioning God in the midst of afflictions in order that the grace of Christ might dwell upon him for the salvation of others appears to be a pattern in Pauline prayer (2 Cor 2:14–17; 4:7–15; 7:5–7; 9:11–15). In 2 Corinthians 4:15, for example, Paul renders thanks to God at the conclusion of a list of afflictions that shows how the resurrection power of Jesus is displayed (4:7–12). It is not the affliction itself that leads to thanksgiving in this passage, but that, through weakness (i.e., "death," in vvs. 10, 12), Christ becomes visible (cf. 4:7, 10, 11). Presumably this was his prayer in the perilous situation in Asia as well. One may distinguish between selfish prayer (e.g., Jas 4:2, 3) and prayer for self. Paul's prayers for himself were offered in the light of the proclamation of the gospel for the realisation of the salvation plan of God, in which enterprise he had been appointed as an apostle.

It is important at this point to note that Paul does not boast of his afflictions because they destroy him, but because they do not. Each and every one of them—and this includes all the items in the Peristasenkataloge—is either countered or reversed by God's Yes to Paul (4:8–9; cf. 1:18–20). Paul's point in these lists is not that death is life, or that weakness is strength (12:10b), but that the life of Jesus is seen to be at work in the midst of Paul's death or weakness. For this he gives thanks. But if thanksgiving follows petition and leads to further petition (1:8–11; cf. ch. VIII.B.4, above), then Paul's prayer for himself in the midst of afflictions (i.e., for his rescue) must be presumed. Of course, he does not pray merely for his rescue and survival, but that through the rescue God's power and Son might be seen and bring some to life through the annunciation of the good news (cf. 2:14–17). As 2 Corinthians 1:8–11 indicates, Paul wants the Corinthians to enter into this way of life in which suffering, petition/thanksgiving, and eschatological power and salvation are integrally related. The God who brings his people into distress has also given them

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65 Even a casual glance at the afflictions found in the Peristasenkataloge makes one wonder how Paul ever survived them.
the powerful instrument of prayer, in response to which he will display his powerful salvation by his Spirit, through his word, and in the name of his Son.

The thorn in the flesh episode, therefore, did not lead Paul to cease praying for himself, but rather the opposite. Paul now prayed that his rescue would show God to be the one who raised Jesus from the dead (1:9; 4:10). From what one can gather from the evidence, Paul's prayers were successful, not only in delivering him from harm, but also in convincing others of God's grace in Christ, that grace of which he was assured in weakness and continued to experience in and through petitionary prayer.
XI. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE PAULINE CORPUS

The main observation from the previous three chapters on Pauline prayer with respect to the relationship between promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer is its accent upon God's Yes in Christ (2 Cor 1:20). Two aspects may be highlighted here. Firstly, prayer to the "God and Father our Lord Jesus Christ" is a privilege of adoption, brought by the Spirit of God at conversion and enabled by that same Spirit throughout the Christian's life (Rom 8:14–16; Gal 4:6; cf. Phil 1:18–19). The Spirit is particularly given to ensure prayer's success in the present distress in which the faith of the Christian and the unity of the congregation are ever under attack by the enemy and alert endurance is required in order to "stand" (Eph 6:10–18; Col 4:2–3; cf. Phil 1:18–19). This links into the second feature of Pauline petition: Paul views each successful engagement with the enemy in petitionary prayer as part of the victory of Christ over sin, death, and the spiritual powers. This sense of present victory undergirds his own declaration of thanks to God (Rom 1:8; 7:25; 1 Cor 15:57; 2 Cor 2:14; 4:13) and his call for others to render thanks to God for the realisation of Christ's victory in the here and now (e.g., 2 Cor 1:11; 9:15; Phil 4:6–7; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 5:16–18). In short, while promises to petitionary prayer in Paul are rare (Phil 4:6–7), the certainty of being heard is deeply embedded into his theological and eschatological framework of thought.

This emphasis on Yes does not mean, however, that Paul is unaware of limitations to petition but that he does not appear to understand them in the same ways as many of his interpreters. The study of Romans 8:26–27—interpreted by the majority of scholars to mean that only petitions in accordance with God's will are successful—revealed that Paul considers Christians to be constantly hampered in their prayers by circumstances, inability, and the divine hand. God has not left his weakened saints bereft or uncertain of either success in their prayers or of hope in their salvation but has supplied his Spirit, who makes sympathetic and advocating intercession on their behalf to the Father. Not only may the saints be assured of their longings reaching God, but that the Spirit's intercessions—and hence their sighs—are bringing about the fulfilment of God's plans in Christ, that is, God's will. Paul has re-cast the frustration of prayer into the "already–not yet" eschatological tension.
through his integrative understanding of the Spirit who forms the bridge between the two poles of the tension and therefore between the poles of promise and limitation in petitionary prayer. The examination of the second supposed limitation, 2 Corinthians 12:7–10, did not support the view that Paul did not pray for himself after the "thorn in the flesh" episode described there. Rather, it was found that a new era of Paul's ministry began at that time in which he saw his afflictions as the arena in which the power of Christ was displayed for the benefit of others (and ultimately for his own salvation). Together with the evidence from 2 Corinthians 1:8–11 that Paul prayed for his own release, the thorn in the flesh incident shows that Paul engaged in his mission in complete dependence upon Christ, "so that the power of Christ might rest upon me" (12:9b). Here the "power" of Christ is integrated into petitionary prayer so that Paul not only seeks answers to his own needs but looks to the realisation of Christ's victory in the hearts and lives of others about him.

The "thorn in the flesh" incident also raises the important theme of God's presence in Pauline petition. In Philippians 4:7, Paul indicates that God supplies his protective peace to guard the hearts and minds of those who, casting anxiety aside, bring all their requests to him with thanksgiving. This presence is undoubtedly connected to the interceding work of the Spirit on the heart mentioned in Romans 8:26–27 as well as the "power of Christ" that dwells upon those who believe that power is perfected in weakness (2 Cor 12:9). The mediation of Christ was seen as an important element in the relationship between promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer in the above chapters on the Synoptic and Johannine Gospels and also raised in the Letter of James. The presence of Christ lies at the heart of Pauline theology (e.g., Rom 8:9–11; 2 Cor 3:16–18; Col 1:27) and it is no surprise to find it as the bonus supplied to dependent petitionary prayer in the "not yet."

The last item one should mention in this summary of findings on the Pauline prayer material is the example of Paul himself. While Paul cannot be placed alongside Jesus in Gethsemane as a pioneering and effective example of petitionary prayer in the midst of trial, the frequency of prayer mentions and instructions along with his own thanksgivings and the "thorn in the flesh" incident render him an example to follow (cf. 1 Cor 10:31). Specifically, Paul does not appear to submit his own needs to the will of God in petitionary prayer. Firstly, the qualification of the "will of God" to petition only appears in Paul in connection with God's purposes in Christ. Secondly, through the "thorn in the flesh" episode, Paul learned to pray with
complete expection of his own need being heard and of God achieving his own purposes. While the latter expection drove the former it did not cancel it out.
XII. CONCLUSIONS FROM THE STUDY

The aim of this study has been to investigate the relationship between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer within the New Testament with a view to presenting a synthesis of both aspects within a theology of prayer. The motive for the study arose from the observation in a number of scholarly and popular presentations that, in the light of the tension between promises to and restrictions upon petition, Christians are meant to subordinate their suffering to the will of God or the kingdom purposes of God rather than to petition God about it. Indeed, seeking answers to petitions is said by many to be less worthy than intercession for those who suffer or than seeking union with God's will through suffering. In addition, a number of scholars concluded that the many New Testament promises to petitionary prayer should not be taken at face value but in a symbolic way. What was clear in the survey of previous work was that scholars tended to read the tension through a previously-existing grid rather than to deal with the tension within the texts or corpora in which they occur. No serious attempt had been made to answer the question of how apparently contradictory statements about petitionary prayer could be found within the same book or corpus. Moreover, some segments of the New Testament had not been given sufficient attention within scholarly investigation. The study aimed, therefore, to determine the relationship between promises to petitionary prayer and restrictions upon it within the New Testament with a view to providing an integrated understanding of the whole.

To achieve its aim, the study selected promises to and restrictions upon prayer from distinct corpora (the Synoptic Gospels and the Pauline Corpus) or self-standing works (the Gospel of John and the Letter of James) and sought to draw conclusions on the thesis question at each stage. This chapter seeks to bring the study to a conclusion by reviewing these findings and applying them to the thesis questions raised at the start. A number of pastoral implications are also suggested at the close of the chapter.

Part One of the study covered prayer material in the Synoptic Gospels. It examined the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9–13 par. Luke 11:2b–4; ch. II), the unconditional (Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13) and conditional (Mark 9:29 and
11:22–25 par. Matt 21:21–22) prayer promises (ch. III), and Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–42 par. Matt 26:36–46; Luke 22:39–46; ch. IV). The Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9–13 par. Luke 11:2b–4), as the central prayer of the New Testament and probably Christianity as a whole, contains both limitations upon and promises to petitionary prayer, not only in specific petitions that favoured one aspect or the other but also within each petition itself. The reason for this co-existence of promise and restriction was found to be the "already–not yet" eschatological framework inaugurated through Jesus' teaching and ministry. The prayer also highlighted the connection between everyday needs and the kingdom of God along with the conditions of dependent faith and forgiveness for successful petition. Each of these aspects is under threat in the era in which the Great Tribulation has been launched.

Jesus' prayer promises (Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13; Mark 9:29 and 11:22–25 par. Matt 21:21–22) are grounded in the generosity of the Father and the availability of the power of the kingdom of God to those who pray. The kingdom of God has dawned within Jesus' ministry and the dynamic presence of the Spirit is promised to those who pray dependently about everyday events, which are being used by God in the forward movement of his kingdom (Luke 11:13; 12:32). Jesus' authoritative mediation of God's kingdom power and generosity means that he becomes both the co-object of faith and the co-petitioner of the supplicant, a role he continues after his resurrection. The Markan prayer promises also posited the opposition of Satanic forces to those who pray, but these are no match for the God who does the impossible and for those who believe in him and emulate his forgiveness.

Jesus' Gethsemane prayer (Mark 14:32–42 par. Matt 26:36–46; Luke 22:39–46) is a prayer in which he both submits to God's purpose in the midst of the most awful distress and a prayer of great faith (cf. Mark 9:23; 10:27). The tension of Jesus in the Garden between his own will and the salvation purposes of God is resolved through prayer, indicating, once again, that dependent prayer forwards these purposes in the midst of evil circumstances. Jesus is also surrounded by his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane where they are to be "with" him. They appear oblivious to the trial he undergoes for them, a trial that one day will be theirs (cf. Mark 10:38, 39), and fail to heed his warnings to remain alert. The suggestion in the Gethsemane context of Jesus' presence after his death brings a needed balance to the
disloyalty of the disciples and suggests that in the future they too will realise the purposes of God in the midst of distressful prayer by his strength.

In the Synoptic Gospels, then, the tension between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer is embedded in the prayer teaching and practice of Jesus, which assumes the "already–not yet" eschatological tension. This tension appears to consist of the presence of the Spirit within the inaugurated kingdom on one side and the threat of the Great Tribulation on the other. Between these poles is the person of Christ who, as the inaugurator of the kingdom, acts as a mediator of requests to God and of God's generosity to petitioners, a mediation he will continue after his resurrection from the dead.

Part Two of the thesis examined two books that were independent of the Synoptic Gospels but that employed the prayer-promise language of that corpus to some extent. The first book, the Gospel of John (ch. VI), contains a large number of prayer promises (John 14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16: 23, 24, 26–27), set within the period between Jesus' departure and return. These promises gain their strength from the exalted Son in whose name they are offered. They are issued by him to forward the mission of the Father and the Son in the world. The repetition of the promises and their emphasis on asking "anything"—together with the reality of a new era inaugurated by Jesus' ascension to the Father—means that answers may be confidently expected to prayer.

The ultimate condition laid upon Johannine petition is the glorification of the Father (12:27–28; 14:13; 15:8; 17:1, 2, 4; cf. Matt 6:9 par. Luke 11:2). Jesus seeks and fulfils this condition in the completion of his "work" (e.g., 4:34; 19:30). Other conditions upon petition echo those found in the prayer promises of Synoptic Gospels but are given a Johannine twist: (1) believing in Jesus' "name" (14:12–14; i.e., personal acceptance that Jesus has come from the Father and is at one with the Father); (2) abiding in Jesus (14:15–15:17; i.e., continuing to believe in the "name" of Jesus as the revelation of the Father); and, (3) emulating Jesus (13:34, 35; 15:12–17; i.e., loving as he loved). There is more than a hint in John that prayer will be offered by the disciples within a context of opposition from the "world" and the "prince" of the world (15:18–16:4a; 17:13–18; 14:30). Although the "already–not yet" eschatological tension leans heavily to the "already" direction in John it is still present. Especially to be noted in this regard is the way that the world (16:33b) and its ruler (12:31) have been conquered and yet the disciples are told that they will
continue to have tribulation in the world (16:33a, with its "hour," 16:4a; cf. Luke 22:53; Mark 14:41 par. Matt 26:45).

A strong limitation upon petitionary prayer is thought by many to be placed by Jesus' prayer for the Father's name to be glorified in John 12:27–28—offered at the arrival of the "hour" of his exaltation (death and resurrection). The examination of this text showed how it must be placed within Jesus' freely chosen obedience to complete the Father's work (4:34; 19:30), and that it is part of the Christological sequencing of events in John: Jesus' hour and glorification move from death to resurrection/exaltation. This must be contrasted with the mixed nature of the disciples' hour, in which they have both joy and distress. The role of the Spirit may also come into play here, since in John the Spirit both comforts and strengthens the disciples in their trials and emboldens them in their witness to the world (and their prayers?) about the exaltation of the Son. There is, however, no clear connection of the Spirit and prayer in the Farewell Discourse of John (compare John 4:23–24).

The prayer promises of James (1:5–8; 4:2–3; 5:13–18; ch. VII) are presented in a consistent pattern, similar to that found in the Synoptic Gospels, and find their foundation in the character and purposes of God as presented throughout the book. However the generosity of God is matched by his desire that petitioners willingly engage in the purpose of perfection, an eschatological goal of wholeness that reaches from the individual to the community and on to the cosmos. Within this framework petitioners may be fully confident of being heard. Those who refuse to engage in the purpose of God, who do not allow the rejuvenating word have its end, may expect nothing. The accent in James is on the "not yet," although those who entrust themselves to God's plans and live with others in the community in ways that reflect his character are encouraged to pray with expectation of being heard in the midst of trials, including grief and sickness. Sickness (and prayer in this context) is given significant treatment in the conclusion to the message and the prayer teaching of the book as a whole (5:13–18). Healing will come about, says James, in the presence of the risen Lord when the community as a whole recognizes the needs of others before God and confesses its own sin. The integration of promises to and limitation upon petitionary prayer in James takes place within the individual and the congregation.

The Third Part of the examination focussed on the Pauline Corpus and began by noting the depth and breadth of Pauline prayer and the deep confidence Paul displays in petitionary prayer in the current eschatological distress. His confidence is
grounded in the fact that it is the Spirit of God, given at conversion, who initiates and maintains prayer to *Abba* Father (Rom 8:14–16; Gal 4:6; cf. Phil 1:18–19) and holds fast the believer's inheritance in the midst of the sufferings that are an inevitable part of belonging to Christ (Rom 8:17). In this context, alert prayer enables the believer to "stand" (Eph 6:10–13, 18; Col 4:2–3) and leads to thanksgiving when the trial is over. Petitionary prayer for everyday needs is also caught up into this same promissory framework: God will supply his peace that passes all understanding to guard the hearts and minds of those who, casting anxiety aside, bring all their requests to him with thanksgiving (4:6–7; cf. 2 Cor 12:9b; Rom 8:15–16; Gal 4:6).

Two Pauline texts, noted by scholars as limitations to prayer (Rom 8:26–27; 2 Cor 12:7–10), were actually found to reinforce the essential Pauline prayer framework outlined above. In Romans 8:26–27, Paul says that, within the "already–not yet" context in which petition is being necessarily restrained, God's Spirit makes sympathetic and advocating intercession on behalf of the saints to the Father. In this intercession, the fulfilment of God's plans in Christ is being accomplished and the deepest desires of believers for redemption are being heard and answered. The "thorn in the flesh" incident (2 Cor 12:7–10) does not, as some think, support the view that Paul did not pray for himself. Rather, it initiated a new era of Paul's ministry in which he saw his afflictions and God's hoped-for restoration displaying the wonder of Christ to others, working his and their salvation. Whilst there is no denying the paucity of explicit prayers for self in Paul, fresh consideration of evidence from 2 Corinthians showed that Paul probably prayed regularly and successfully for his own release from trials (see, e.g., the "catalogues of affliction"), attributing success to the power of the resurrected Christ displayed in Paul's weakness. In this, as in his prayer material as a whole, Paul intends himself as an example to those who pray.

As demonstrated in all sections of the thesis, then, the tension between promises to and restrictions upon petitionary prayer is to various degrees embedded in the prayer material itself and exists because the period of petition is one in which God's kingdom has arrived and yet is presently being resisted by an opposing force. As John might put it, although Jesus has ascended to the Father having conquered the world and cast out its ruler, temporal harm will continue to be inflicted upon the disciples. Petitioners, therefore, have both every confidence of being heard and face the reality of not always receiving what is requested. This is not because the Father
thinks it unnecessary or beneath him but because his kingdom is being brought about in the midst of resistance and rejection. Nevertheless, all petitions (rightfully asked)—and even frustrated prayer syllables—are captured by the Spirit towards the glorious fulfilment of the salvation plan of God.

A number of things may be noted about this embedded nature promises to and limitations upon petition within the "already–not yet" eschatological tension. The first thing is that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all actively engaged in petitionary prayer. The salvation plan of God is not a coldly-executed campaign, but one that has at its heart a God who is a generous Father, longing to provide for those who ask. In his provision, he will give more than is requested—even his Holy Spirit—so that his kingdom may be extended and his people may enjoy his peace (Luke 11:13 par. Matt 7:11; Phil 4:6–7). Furthermore, in fulfilment of his plan, God sent his Son to inaugurate and mediate it in the present age (Mark 14:36 par. Matt 26:39, 42; Luke 22:42; John 11:41b–42; 12:27–28; 17:1–26; cf. Heb 4:14–16; 5:7–10). Jesus was and remains the bearer of the promise to prayer, the teacher of prayer, the example of prayer, the recipient of prayer, and the means of prayer to the Father (Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13; Matt 6:9–13 par. Luke 11:1–4; Mark 9:29; John 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26; 2 Cor 12:8, 9). Finally, within this grand scheme, the Spirit is received by believers as the gift to faith in Christ (Rom 8:14–16; Gal 4:6; cf. Luke 11:13), providing comfort and protection, sympathetically interceding for believers' frustration in their longings and prayers and bringing them to fruition in the outworking of God's purposes (Rom 8:26–28; cf. John 15:26; 16:7–11). To return to theology for a moment, the integration of promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer is not only embedded in the "already–not yet" eschatological tension but is also grounded in the persons and work of the Godhead.

The second point—noted in each of the traditions examined—is that the salvation plan of God is being brought to bear in a time of intense distress in which the saints must call upon God for help—known within Jewish and Christian writings as the "Great Tribulation." In Gethsemane, Jesus appears to sense this hour was upon him in a particular way. He warns his disciples of the imminence of this time for them and urges them to be vigilant lest they fall into the sleep of this age (Mark 14:33–34, 37–41 and pars.; cf. Mark 10:38–39; Luke 12:49–50). In John's Gospel, Jesus warns the disciples of the persecution they will receive (John 15:20–21; 16:2–3; 17:15; cf. 9:22), indicating that the Spirit will be sent to convict the world of its sin
(John 16:1–11; cf. 17:20–26) and to remind them of his words of promise (16:14–15; cf. 14:25–26). In James the threat was present within the trials that the readers "fall upon" every day, for which wisdom was needed lest these give way to temptation, sin, and constant disharmony (1:2–8; 3:13–4:10). For Paul, the distress erupted at the victorious resurrection of Christ, which drew the saints into battle with heavenly powers necessitating alertness to the Enemy and unity among saints (e.g., Eph 4:1–6; 6:10–20; 1 Thess 5:1–22). On all these occasions, survival in and ultimate victory over this present struggle will come about primarily through dependent prayer. Moreover, both Jesus and the apostle Paul gained fresh understanding of God's salvation plan and their part in it through prayer.

The third item to note about the "already–not yet" context of petitionary prayer is how the idea of the "will of God" is recast in its light. The study has shown that this concept must be expressed within the unfolding salvation plan of God and not within a predetermined schema. The Synoptic Gospels defined God's will to include not only the ultimate salvation outcome but also the daily provisions and essential needs of God's people, all caught up in the gracious kingdom of God. Paul, for his part, considers God's will to be "in Christ," reshaping it towards God's salvation purposes for all creation with Christ as Lord (1 Thess 5:16–18; Rom 8:27; 15:30–33). John's Gospel redefines the will of God in a Christological fashion (4:34) and places petitionary prayer as a benefit endowed by the ascended Son for the glory of the Father. In other words, the "will of God" is not only final and contingent, as Cullmann observed (see ch. I.B.2.d above), it is intimately connected to the petitions of God's people (Rom 1:10; 15:32).

The connection of petitionary prayer with the unfolding of God's plan within the eschatological "already–not yet" tension helps to answer another question raised by scholars about the relationship of prayer and suffering. The study found that suffering is a trial that believers "fall upon" (Jas 1:2–4), a "cup" that is given directly by God to Jesus and the disciples (Mark 10:38, 39; 14:36), and a God-given debilitating restriction upon ministry (2 Cor 12:7). But in no case was it preferred that they cease petitionary prayer in favour of intercessory prayer (contra Miller; cf. ch. I.B.2.b above). Indeed, in Paul's case, it would appear that as a result of the "thorn in the flesh" incident he petitioned God all the more (cf. 2 Cor 1:8–11; 12:7–10). It is also not necessary to minimize the prayer promises in order to accommodate the complexity unanswered prayer or suffering. Weakness or
suffering has no virtue or strength of its own. Rather, because of the resurrection of Jesus, a new era has opened up (by the Spirit) in which God's power may now dwell on his saints in weakness so that others might give glory to God (John 12:27–28; 14:12–14; 16:24; 17:1–26; 2 Cor 1:8–11; 4:7–15; 12:7–10). This is but another example of the integration of promise and restriction within the "already–not yet" eschatological tension. In the requesting of one thing God supplies something much more (Luke 11:13; 12:32; cf. Rom 8:26–27; Phil 1:18b–19; 4:6–7). This does not devalue the earlier request (be it material or personal), but reinforces the "already" of God's generosity, which overflows from distress into other things that bring about his salvation purposes. This is the heart of the Gethsemane prayer and the "thorn in the flesh" episode. For Paul in particular, thanksgiving provides a regular opportunity to acknowledge God's hand at work in and through the trials and distresses that come upon him and believers as they participate in Christ (cf. 2 Cor 1:2–11).

Another related feature found in a number of witnesses was how dependent petitionary prayer offered the midst of suffering led to God supplying his very own presence. This point was also raised by some of the scholars surveyed in Chapter I (esp. Cullmann). The study found that God's presence through prayer is found as part of the "much more" given to those who ask, seek, or knock (Matt 7:7–11 par. Luke 11:9–13), as a response to obedience to Christ's commands for his community (Matt 18:19–20), as part of the divine answer to sickness and community division when sin is confessed (Jas 5:15–16), as a promise to dependence (Phil 4:6–7), as a down-payment of adoption (Rom 8:15–16; Gal 4:6), and as power in weakness (2 Cor 12:9–10).

One may sum up this presence as the on-going work of the Spirit of Christ applying the reality of the mediation of the resurrection power of Jesus in the "already" of God's salvation plan that enables endurance until the "not yet."

Regarding conditions for effective petitionary prayer, all the traditions examined in the study issued the call for a faith that abandons pretence and willingly engages with God in the working out of his salvation plan (Mark 9:22–24; 11:22–24; cf. Jas 1:5–8; 5:16; Gal 1:15; 2 Cor 12:8–10) and for a love that demonstrates relational consistency through forgiveness of sins (Mark 11:25; Matt 6:13, 14–15

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1 In John's Gospel, the presence of the Son, the Father, and the Spirit is promised to the disciples at the return of the Son to the Father (14:16, 23); there is no additional presence to those who pray, although they may be confident of the Spirit's presence in times of persecution (15:26–16:15).
par. Luke 11:4; John 15:16; cf. Jas 4:2–3; 5:14–16). These conditions had been noted by previous scholars but in the present work have been seen as integrated within the salvation plan revealed in Christ and effected by his Spirit. The Letter of James had not been fully considered on this question before the present study. The opening section of the letter makes it clear that in the context of trials (which may lead to sin) prayer for wisdom is required for a correct perspective on the eschatological context in which one lives. But the petitioner must already concur with the process and goal of "falling upon various trials," that is, believe and not doubt. The "tension" between promise and limitation, then, not only exists in the prayer promises and prayer material itself, but also in the petitioner, who is not only rendered weak by the divine hand (Rom 8:26), but also by his or her own sin.

In summary, then, the tension between promises to and limitations upon petitionary prayer within the New Testament is embedded within the eschatological tension between the "already" and the "not yet" found throughout the New Testament. This tension is not static but dynamic as God (Father, Son, and Spirit) brings about his salvation plan, incorporating the prayers of God's people, even in the midst of trials and suffering (including that from his own hand); petitionary prayer is a key means by which God's kingdom is being brought to bear. However, suffering is not only endured but is used by God to grant insight into his salvation purpose as the believer, by the Spirit, testifies to their adoption, and as Christ draws and conforms his fellow heirs to himself (Rom 8:12–30). This picture has been shown to be true from a sufficiently wide spectrum of the New Testament to be considered a feature of the whole.

Regarding the pastoral implications of the research, the following may be suggested: (1) petitioners should approach God with boldness and expectation of being heard. Those who call upon God as "Father" do so only because of their adoption by the Spirit as children of God and fellow heirs with Christ. (2) Those who suffer must be given encouragement to pray openly to God. While pastoral sensitivity is vital, despair is a great enemy of faith for which prayer has been given as an antidote and a means by which God may well make plain the significance of what is being endured. (3) While the source of opposition is sometimes able to be identified, it is mostly hidden. Without becoming over-confident in the victory that Christ has won and "claiming" victory at every turn, believers may and must see themselves engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle that will be fought with the
enablement of prayer. The saints enter the fray in the full knowledge of the presence of the risen Christ by his Spirit. They have his example of dependent prayer before the most hideous of forces and they anticipate giving thanks to God when their prayer is heard. (4) God's goodness, consistency, and generosity remain foundational to prayer, but he must be approached with open-heartedness and genuine dependence. If there is any aspect that needs more exposition to engender prayer it is the character and purposes of God. In the forwarding of his own great purposes in Christ, God, by the Spirit, gathers up the deepest needs and longings of believers and returns to them far more than they request, even his very presence. (5) Petitioners must recapture the centrality and significance of the "name" of Jesus, who is the ground, mediator, and model of all prayer. Far from a talisman for successful petition, "Jesus Christ" is the revelation of the Father, now present with the Father and the guarantee of the Father's response to prayer. (6) The sheer number of prayer promises throughout the New Testament means they must be allowed to take their proper place within the devotional lives of God's people. Regular prayer should include the grand themes of God's salvation plan and the many smaller things that make up daily existence. In this way, as the details of the plan of salvation unveiled in Christ are brought to mind, petitioners begin to see their own desires finding their place within it.
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