

The Lord's Prayer viewed dispensationally

There is an article by Pastor Paul Sadler of the Berean Bible Society in which he gives the Lord's Prayer a mid-Acts 'going over'. The resulting impression is that the prayer is exclusively a prayer for 'Israel in the tribulation' and almost entirely inappropriate for believers today. Even "Our Father" is not OUR Father any more.

This is a common and beloved prayer of millions of Christians. I was taught it as a child. The Lord who gave this prayer to Israel is the same Lord who is now seated in glory at the right hand of the Father.

The dispensation has changed. Israel is partially blinded. The Lord in his heavenly ministry sent the apostle Paul to us Gentiles. But rather than alienate the millions who use this prayer I believe we should try to find as much common ground in it as possible rather than as many differences as possible. The author of the prayer is also the author of our eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:9 and 12:2).

The comments of Pastor Paul Sadler of the Berean Bible Society are in italics.

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.

The reference here to "our Father" is to the God and Father of Israel—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In prophecy, heaven was His throne and earth His footstool. His name was so holy that the Jews feared they might inadvertently speak it in vain, so they changed it from Yahweh to Adonai—Master, Ruler (Deut. 5:11; Isa. 66:1; Matt. 15:31; Luke 1:68).

This is such a unnecessary attempt to establish a difference where there is NONE. Jesus was speaking of HIS FATHER. In this present dispensation God the Father is identified as the GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:" (Ephesians 1:3 AV)

Paul sends grace and peace to the Roman church from God **OUR FATHER**.

"To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 1:7 AV)

We who are in Christ can call him by the close and personal ABBA FATHER.

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." (Romans 8:15 AV)

"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Galatians 4:6 AV)

In a less personal sense he is the Father of all creation.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." (Genesis 1:1 AV)

Paul is talking to UNBELIEVERS here - heathen, Greek, idol worshippers. Even unbelievers are the offspring of God.

"That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: **For in him we live, and move, and have our being;** as certain also of your own poets have said, **For we are also his offspring.** Forasmuch then as **we are the offspring of God,** we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." (Acts 17:27-29 AV)

The God of Abraham? Are we not Abraham's children by faith?

"Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham." (Galatians 3:7 AV)

Is heaven no longer his throne? Is earth no longer his footstool? I think not. And regardless of what the Jews called him, HE IS WHAT HE IS.

"And God said unto Moses, **I AM THAT I AM;** and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, **I AM** hath sent me unto you." (Exodus 3:14 AV)

In spite of the heathens among us using God and Jesus as cuss words, to all genuine believers their names are hallowed, though not always hallowed enough by some of us.

The real dispensational difference here that Pastor Paul should have focused on is that the Father has put all things (except himself) under the Son's feet. It is now the Son's name that is above every name. This was not the case when Jesus gave the disciples the Lord's Prayer at the Sermon on the Mount.

"For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." (1 Corinthians 15:27-28 AV)

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11 AV)

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

The hope of every Israelite was the establishment of the Davidic Kingdom. God's will for the earth is to overthrow the kingdoms of this world and establish the millennial kingdom of His dear Son (II Sam. 7:8-17; Luke 1:68-72; Rev. 11:15; 20:6)

ONE of Israel's hopes was/is the Davidic millennial kingdom but the "good news" of the kingdom was not that the Davidic millennial kingdom was at hand. NO-ONE, NOT EVEN THE SON, knew when that was coming.

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." (Mark 13:32 AV)

Just prior to his ascension the Lord still refused to be drawn on when the Davidic kingdom was coming but did promise that they would receive the Holy Ghost and power.

"When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, **wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?** And he said unto them, **It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.** But **ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:** and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8 AV)

ANOTHER HOPE OF ISRAEL, other "good news" of the kingdom, was ACTUALLY AT HAND - the resurrection from the dead. After his ascension, Jesus and the Father sent the HOLY SPIRIT OF PROMISE to the believers - the EARNEST (pledge and foretaste) of the believer's inheritance in the eternal, spiritual, heavenly kingdom of God.

"But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: **of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.**" (Acts 23:6 AV)

"In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were **sealed with that holy Spirit of promise**, Which is the **earnest of our inheritance** until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." (Ephesians 1:13-14 AV)

Paul was "bound with this chain" for the "hope of Israel". Paul was bound because he preached the resurrection of the dead to the eternal, heavenly kingdom of God – promised unto the fathers and the HOPE OF THE TWELVE TRIBES.

"For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that **for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.**" (Acts 28:20 AV)

" And now I stand and am judged for **the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come.** For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, **that God should raise the dead?**" (Acts 26:6-8 AV)

Therefore when saved believers today pray "thy kingdom come", we are praying that;

1. his earthly, temporal Davidic kingdom comes (Israel's millennial kingdom – we all want that to come don't we?);

2. that his present and available spiritual kingdom comes (being filled with the Spirit – Romans 14:17; Ephesians 5:18) AND
3. that we come to his eternal heavenly kingdom when we depart this present evil world (2 Corinthians 4:17-18, 5:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; 2 Timothy 4:18; 1 Peter 1:3-4).

Pastor Paul seems to have lumped “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven” into the future installation of Israel’s Davidic kingdom. I don’t know about you but I got saved after I had prayed daily to God for three years “Lord please show me your will for me today”. After a long and winding series of events, his Spirit came upon me “like a thief in the night” – during an argument with a mid-Acts preacher.

Getting saved was a big deal for me. So we also pray that his heavenly will becomes our earthly reality in our ordinary, mundane life in this present evil world – not just his big, overall will for heaven and earth but his will that all men and women be saved and become little heavenly embassies on earth.

“Now then **we are ambassadors** for Christ, as though *God did beseech you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20 AV)

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; **Who will have all men to be saved**, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:3-4 AV)

The mystery of his will is to gather together in one all things in Christ – both which are in heaven and which are on earth.

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:” (Ephesians 1:9-10 AV)

Give us this day our daily bread.

In the future tribulation, God will set a table in the wilderness for His people, as He did in time past. The saints in that day will find it necessary to pray for their daily provision of food, since they will be unable to buy or sell without the Mark of the Beast. Consequently, God will supernaturally nourish the chosen nation (Rev. 12:14 cf. Rev. 13:13-18).

This is good teaching about the future tribulation. The Lord spoke at length about the coming tribulation but his teaching this prayer to the disciples is not embedded in the passage about the great tribulation in Matthew 24. It is deeply embedded in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), amongst a great many other teachings about how God’s people should conduct themselves under NORMAL, EVERYDAY, CIRCUMSTANCES – not only in the midst of the greatest tribulation the world will ever experience.

So why would anyone apply it solely to the great tribulation? Because of an over-zealous application of right division, therefore making it wrong division. That’s why.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing** the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15 AV)

[We must not just keep on dividing the word of truth – willy nilly. We must RIGHTLY divide. There seems to be a tendency of our natural minds to seek ever more division once we have started down the dividing path. But it only takes one small WRONG element of our initial division to cause a broadening division the further one gets away from the initial dividing point. I believe that the word of truth which has been most commonly wrongly divided at the source is the word of the kingdom. The kingdom of God is a multi-dimensional kingdom and cannot be restricted to always and ONLY meaning the restored, Davidic, earthly, temporal kingdom when the Lord was ministering to the lost sheep of Israel.]

'Our daily bread' simply means the food we need to get through this day, symbolised by bread.

"Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread." (2 Thessalonians 3:12 AV)

I hear the objection of an over-zealous Bible divider - "We have to work for our daily bread today. We don't pray to God for it." To which I reply "If God has nothing to do with our daily supply of bread then WHY DO WE GIVE THANKS FOR IT?"

"..... and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:" (1 Timothy 4:3-4 AV)

The spiritual food we need to get through each day is also symbolised by bread.

"And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." (John 6:35 AV)

"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28 AV)

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Today we are to forgive others, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven us, but under the kingdom gospel, forgiveness was based upon a like-spirit (Matt. 18:21-35 cf. Eph. 4:32).

Pastor Paul is right about the dispensational difference here because the Lord's Prayer was given prior to the Lord's offering himself as the one sacrifice for sins forever.

"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;" (Hebrews 10:12 AV)

Here is the forgiveness teaching for this present age of grace.

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Ephesians 4:32 AV)

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." (Colossians 3:13 AV)

Saved believers do not ask that God "forgive us our debts (or sins – Luke 11:4)", as though God for Christ's sake has not already forgiven them. But we do "forgive one another".

But I wish Pastor Paul hadn't defined the difference by saying it was "under the kingdom gospel". It was a different teaching because it was under the dispensation of the law to Israel and prior to Calvary.

Our apostle's MAIN 'good news' or gospel was God's grace. But Paul also preached the gospel or 'good news' of the kingdom of God.

"And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him." (Acts 28:30-31 AV)

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil [Gr. noun: evil one].

The sense here is, "Lord lead us not into the Great Tribulation, but deliver us from Satan, who brings death and destruction in his wake" (Rev. 6:7-11; 12:12; 13:1-10).

Once again Pastor Paul tries to drag the Lord's Prayer from Matthew 6 to Matthew 24.

No God-fearing person in any dispensation wants to be led into temptation. Does God actually ever LEAD us into temptation? If God is sovereign, (and I for one want to believe that he is), then God must ALLOW the temptations of the devil and the flesh in our lives. But for those that are members of his body in this present dispensation he makes a way to escape. This is the dispensational difference that Pastor Paul should have been focusing on. .

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10:13 AV)

Deliverance from evil is also a fair enough thing to pray for in any dispensation. We believers are quite right to pray for deliverance from the snares of the devil. As in 1 Corinthians 10:13 above, our deliverance from evil, as members of his body in this present dispensation, is primarily the "way to escape" that he makes for us. But as

these scriptures show, many, both saved and unsaved, still fall prey to the devil's snares.

"A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into **the condemnation of the devil**. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and **the snare of the devil**." (1 Timothy 3:2-7 AV)

"But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. **For some are already turned aside after Satan**." (1 Timothy 5:11-15 AV)

"But they that will be rich **fall into temptation and a snare**, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in **destruction and perdition**." (1 Timothy 6:9 AV)

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And **that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will**." (2 Timothy 2:24-26 AV)

"For Demas hath forsaken me, **having loved this present world**, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia." (2 Timothy 4:10 AV)

For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

Thankfully Pastor Paul has no dispensational problem with the kingdom, the power and the glory being God's.