

come into His presence but, in His mercy, our Father has made the way for us. How? The Word emptied Himself and was born in the flesh (Hebrews 2:14-17), made in all things like “*His brethren*”, those obedient humans who would wash themselves clean in His blood through baptism (1 Peter 1:18,19).

Thus, when we go into God’s presence in prayer, we are clothed in the blood of Christ, and we present ourselves in His name. **Jesus Christ**, God’s Son and our Brother, Who sits at God’s right hand, is *the one through Whose name and by Whose authority we are allowed to speak to our Father in Heaven.*

Here with us on earth, the **Holy Spirit**, dwells in us, according to the promise: “*Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?*” (1 Corinthians 6:19). Romans 8:26 explains that the Spirit *helps us with those agonized prayers* that we cannot articulate alone.

We need to keep these delineations in the work of the Godhead foremost in our thinking as we pray, so that we will be praying scripturally.

Have you heard prayers like this:

“**Father**, we thank You for **Your body** which You gave for us ...”

“... **Father**, thank You for **Your blood** that was shed for us ...”

“In **Your name** we pray, **Amen.**”

Does the person who is praying not know that God the Father is not the one of the Godhead Who died for us? Does the one who is praying not know that “the Father” to Whom we pray is not the same as “Jesus Christ”, in Whose name we are instructed to pray?

We must respect God’s own distinctions in the work of the Godhead. Nowhere in Scripture does it say that it was God’s body that was sacrificed for us; nowhere does it say that the Holy Spirit died for us. So, **to Whom** are we to pray? to **God the Father**. **Through Whom** must we pray? through **Jesus Christ, our Lord**. And **with Whose aid** may we word those prayers? with the aid of the **Holy Spirit**. These are important distinctions to be remembered when we pray.

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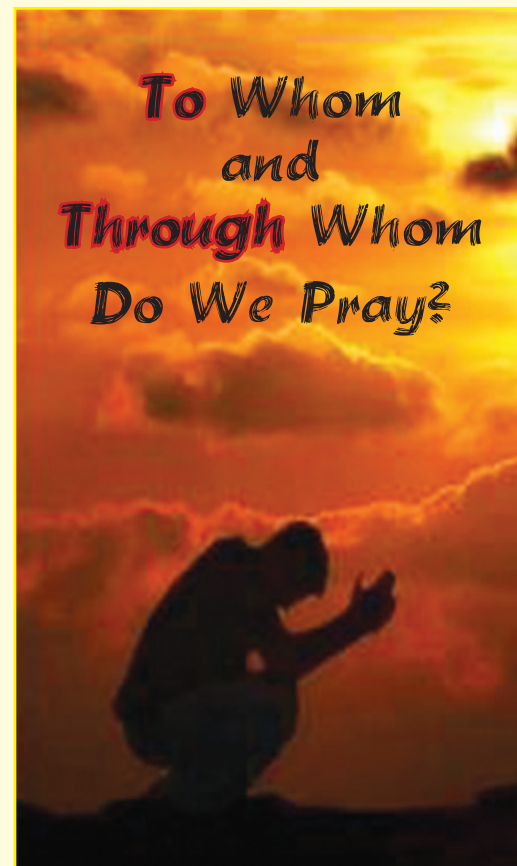
Phone: 662-283-1192

Choate@WorldEvangelism.org

www.WorldEvangelism.org

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To Whom and Through Whom Do We Pray?

Betty Burton Choate

"... Most assuredly, I say unto you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:23,24).

Granted, the finite human mind will not be able to fully comprehend the spiritual Godhead, but the revelation of God tells us as much as we have the ability to grasp. The singular form for "God" in Hebrew — EL — is used about 500 times in Scripture, while the plural form with a singular verb — ELOHIM — is used approximately 3,000 times. This would lead us to conclude that our one God is multiple Persons, and frequent references in Scripture identify these three:

- ◆ the **Lord of Hosts**, the **Word**, the **Spirit of God** (Genesis 1:1,2; John 1:1,3)
- ◆ the **Father**, the **Son**, and the **Holy Spirit** (Matthew 28:19)

◆ *"Jesus ... declared to be the Son of God ... according to the **Spirit** of holiness ..."* (Romans 1:3,4)

◆ *"... the **Spirit** Himself bears witness .. that we are ... heirs of **God** and joint heirs with **Christ** ..."* (Romans 8:16,17)

◆ In Isaiah 48:12,13, we read a declaration: *"**I am He, I am the First, I am also the last** ..."* and going on to verse 16, the same voice continues: *"... and now the **Lord God and His Spirit** have sent me."*

We learn from Scripture that the **Godhead** works together, as in the creation. But further definition in the New Testament (Philippians 2:5-8; John 1:14) shows that when the **Word** emptied Himself and took human form, He subjected Himself to the will of the **Father** who had sent Him into the world (Hebrews 5:8; John 7:16). Then we read in John 14:26, *"But the **Helper**, the **Holy Spirit**, Whom the **Father** will send in My name, He will teach you all things"*

Thus, paying attention to Scriptural delineations, we realize that the **Word**, born into the world as the **Son of God** and the **Son of man** (Hebrews 1:5,6) — our First-born Brother, **Jesus Christ** — has become the bridge connecting us to God. God is **His** Father, Jesus is **our** Brother,

so therefore, God is also **our** Father. Galatians 4:6 says that it is the Spirit of the **Son** within us, crying *"Abba, Father"* that identifies us as **sons of God** and not slaves.

And what about the **Holy Spirit**? As we read earlier, the Apostles were promised that He would be sent to them and would bring to their remembrance all that **Jesus** had taught them. It was through this special inspiration that the Scriptures were written (2 Timothy 3:16), so, in the written word, we have the continual guidance provided by the **Spirit**. We are also told that He is given to all those who obey God (Acts 5:32), that He *strengthens* the inner man (Ephesians 3:16), that He helps us in *our weaknesses*, and that He helps us with *our prayers* when we don't know how to pray (Romans 8:26).

From these passages we learn several important things. Of course we realize that **God** is all-powerful, that He knows all things — He even knows our thoughts before they are fully formulated in our own minds (Psalm 139), so He surely *hears* our prayers, Himself. But in His delineation of His relationship to Christians, **God the Father** is designated as *the One to whom we address our prayers*. Truth be told, as sinful humans we have no right to dare to