

Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

A WRITTEN DEBATE ON:

“IS IT SCRIPTURAL TO PRAY TO JESUS?”

Two Gospel preaching brethren, whom we shall designate as “Beta” and “Delta” (so as publicly not to identify them, and perhaps cause some to take a position on this subject due to their names, rather than the truth), have engaged in a written debate on the controversial subject of “Praying to Jesus.” Neither of these two preachers consider the subject a cause for division in the church, but realize that there may always be varied opinions on this subject, though each is fully persuaded in his own heart that his view is correct, and in harmony with scripture. Each reader is asked to study the matter with an open mind. The following propositions are stated. “*The Bible teaches that in addition to praying to the Father, it is acceptable to pray to Jesus*” (signed/Beta). “*The Bible teaches that prayer is to be offered only to God the Father*” (signed/Delta). The discussion began with Beta in the affirmative, and Delta in the negative.

BETA’S FIRST AFFIRMATIVE

I am delighted to be able to make my first Affirmative argument to my friend Delta. We have been friends all my life, and I have always respected him very much. He has taught me to think for myself, and at times, to even disagree with him on certain topics. I know of no man that I admire, or agree with more than my brother Delta. But, unfortunately, Delta has taken a position that does not agree with God’s word. So with this in mind, let us consider the truths that are found in the Bible.

Years ago I was visiting a certain congregation, and as I glanced through their song book, I realized that there were many songs that had a stamp on them that stated, “We don’t use this song here.” (Or something to that effect.) As I looked for a common thread between these songs, I realized that all of them were songs that either praised Jesus, or they were prayers to our Savior. Songs such as “My Jesus, As Thou Wilt,” “My Jesus, I Love Thee,” “Savior Thy Dying Love” and “Just a Little Talk With Jesus,” are songs that some say cannot be used for this reason. I honestly believe that there are some songs that are not scriptural in our hymnals. But I am not certain that these songs are included in this category.

Is it the case that we cannot pray to Jesus? If so, what makes it right for us to sing songs of praise to our Lord, but then wrong to word a prayer to Him. To me, this is the reason why this debate is so important. The final answer concerning this issue is not how much I enjoy singing these songs, but what does the Bible say about this issue. Can we sing songs

that are a prayer to Jesus? Can we pray to Him? With this in mind, I would like to give the reasons from the Bible as to why we can pray to Jesus. Please pay attention to the following:

I. The first passage I would like to look at is Acts 7:59. Here Stephen is being stoned to death. In verse 56 he sees the “...**Son of man standing on the right hand of God.**” (All scripture quotes are from the *ASV* unless noted otherwise). Then we find him “...**calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.**” With his dying breath he cries out “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” I find a wonderful parallel to my Savior on the cross from Luke 23 when I compare these passages. In verse 34, Jesus says, “**Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.**” Then in verse 46 He says “**Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit...**” Now this is important. If Stephen wanted to imitate our Savior by these two statements, why did he not pray as Jesus did, “**Father, Receive my spirit,**” and “**Father, lay not this sin to their charge?**” Delta wants us to believe that we are commanded to pray only to the Father. But if this is the case, it applies to the apostles as well. When was an apostle of the Lord, or an inspired individual like Stephen, allowed to “sin” simply because they were apostles! We must observe that if the Bible demands our prayers to be given only to the Father, then Stephen is under obligation to follow that commandment from God.

Concerning the prayer Stephen makes to Jesus, Wayne

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Contending FOR THE Faith™

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CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH is published bimonthly. P. O. Box 2357, Spring, Texas 77383-2357 Telephone: (281) 350-5516.

Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
August 3, 1917-October 10, 2001

Editorial...

REGARDING THE DEBATE IN THIS ISSUE OF CFTF

The following debate is printed as we received it because we did not desire to change the way the disputants chose to say what they did. The only exception to the foregoing is the normal changing of spelling corrections, verb agreement, and the like, as well as fitting the debate to our format for all articles printed in CFTF. To do more changing would have necessitated submitting such changes to the disputants for their approval and we did not desire to take the time to go through that process.

—David P. Brown, Editor

Of all truth, spiritual truth is the most important (Mat. 6:33; John 8:31,32; 17:17; 1 Tim. 2:4; Jam. 1:18). Believed and obeyed from the heart, spiritual truth alone procures the remission of man's sins against God and thereby his reconciliation to Him (Rom. 5:10; 6:3, 4, 17, 18; 1 Pet. 1:22; Col. 2:12; Eph. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19). We, therefore, dare not let our admiration for and friendship with any preacher, paper, school, or anyone else cause us to reject the truth on any subject. Moreover, our love for the truth of the gospel should exceed even our love for our families.

In seeking to “**be established in the present truth,**” men have utilized the polemic platform as one means to test their convictions (2 Pet. 1:12). When conducted properly, debates have served well to aid men in complying with Paul's directive to “**Prove all things; hold fast that which is good**” (1The. 5:21). Such debates expose error as well as uphold truth. Such a discussion is a “proving ground” operation.

Both of these brethren have declared their belief in the plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible. Hence, they have acknowledged the Scriptures to be the objective, absolute, humanly attainable, final, infallible standard for determining God's will in any and all matters moral and spiritual (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Jam.1:25; 2 Tim. 2:15; John 12:48). Moreover, each disputant has affirmed his belief in the absolute need and proper use of the rational faculties of man in arriving at the truth on any subject (Isa. 1:18; Acts 17:2; 18:4; 24:25; 1 The. 5:21; 2 The. 3:1, 2). The reader must determine whether the debaters stayed true to and consistent with what they “declared,” “acknowledged,” and “affirmed.”

The debate was a written one. Both disputants argued their cases as they saw fit. Each participant pressed what he deemed to be inconsistencies and contradictions on the part of his opponent. Questions were employed by each party to expose what each disputant considered to be inconsistencies, contradictions, and to keep their readers focused on the issue at hand. This is the nature of a debate; and, therefore, the reason the serious student is benefited by it.

The earnest pupil knows what to look for in a debater's
(Continued on Bottom of Page 17)

Jackson writes: “Guy N. Woods characterized the ‘view that a person cannot address a petition of any kind to Christ’ as ‘absurd,’ and as a reflection of ‘nitpicking.’...” (“Christian-courier.com,” *May a Christian Address Christ in Praise or Prayer?* Look at brother Woods comments in *Over the Vast Horizon – Authorized Biography of Guy N. Woods*, written by Harrell Davidson, pg. 272; also see *Questions & Answers – Vol. II* by Guy N. Woods pg. 39).

II. Our beloved brother Paul tells us about his thorn in the flesh in 2 Cor. 12:7. Then in verse 8 he tells us “**Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.**” The word besought is defined by *Thayer* as “‘to call to one’s side,’ hence, ‘to call to one’s aid.’” Who can doubt that this passage is referring to the fact that Paul prayed to our Lord, not once but 3 times. What a horrible example Paul set if we can only beseech God the Father in our prayers!

III. In Acts 1:24, 25, we find a prayer that is offered by the Apostles to our Lord. This passage reads:

And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show of these two the one whom thou hast chosen, to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas fell away, that he might go to his own place.

J. W. McGarvey says of this prayer: “Here is a simple address to the Lord, beautifully appropriate to the petition they are about to present” (Commentary, *Acts of the Apostles*). What a spectacularly short prayer we find in these two verses.

IV. At the end of the Bible, John issues a short simple prayer: “**Come, Lord Jesus!**” (*ASV*). Certainly one of the last things found in the Bible is a prayer to Jesus that we all should aspire to. We should long for the coming of our Lord, and even pray for it! So we find both at the beginning and at the end of the New Testament (after the gospel account), a prayer is given in the church to Jesus.

V. When Paul wrote to Timothy, he stated: “**And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry**” (1 Tim. 1:12). Did Paul, give thanks to the Father? Yes, at times. But he also gave thanks to our Savior, as we see in this passage, showing by example that we to can give thanks to Jesus as well.

VI. In Acts 22:17, the Bible tells us what the apostle Paul did after he was converted. Paul is now a Christian and the first thing we see is our brother praying to Jesus. Note this verse: “**And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance...**” The Bible tells us he “**...prayed in the temple.**” The one he is praying to is our Lord. We know this because while Paul is praying, he sees the one to whom he is praying to. From verses 18 and 19 we learn that Jesus speaks to him.

Paul is praying to Jesus, then he sees him and speaks to him.

VIII. A very strong argument that is given by Basil Overton in *The World Evangelist*, August, 1986, is the following: In 1 John. 5:13, 14, the Bible reads:

These things have I written unto you that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him. (Emp. Added by Beta).

When you look at “his, he, him” in these verses, they go back to verse 13 where it talks about “**the Son of God.**” There is no doubt that the petition we make is to the Son of God. Here we see a specific passage that tells us we are to pray to the Son of God. If this passage does not teach that it is all right to pray to Jesus, words have no meaning!

I agree with Basil Overton in the article mentioned earlier when he said “Nothing in the above is designed to lessen prayer to God the Father, it is only presented to show that the Bible tells us prayers were made to Jesus Christ. Whoever argues with this, argues with the Bible.”

Now, let me tell you what **Delta** has got to do in the Negative. He must show that the passages that I have used are no longer applicable to the church today. Either that, or show that the men involved in praying to Jesus sinned by their prayer. It does no good to state that these men all had a conversation with Jesus because they were inspired. Inspiration never allowed the apostles to break the commandments of God. If God “commands” us to pray “only” to the Father, and that no prayers can be offered to Jesus, then the apostles are required to follow the commandments of Jesus. Inspiration certainly allowed the apostles to converse with Jesus, but it does not give them the right to “pray” to Jesus as the passages tell us they did. If I speak to **Delta** on the phone, that is acceptable. But if I “pray” to **Delta** as one does to deity, then that is sinful. This is something that we all understand. So it follows that either the apostles sinned, or else they were given the ability to pray to Jesus, and the Bible tells us that we must do differently than the apostles. Those are the only choices **Delta** has in this debate. Let’s see which he chooses!

DELTA’S FIRST NEGATIVE

Jesus taught that we are to abide by His “sayings” (teachings) in the gospel age (Mat. 7:24-28). Among the things He taught, was “**addressing the Father.**” After Jesus had been praying, the apostles wanted Him to teach them “**how**” to pray (Luke 11:2,3). Jesus said to “**pray to the Father**” (Mat. 6:6); “**pray ye, Our Father which art in heaven**” (vs. 9); and “**when ye pray, say, Our Father**” (Luke 11:2). Apostolic confirmation reminds us to do all things, in “**word or deed**” “**in the name of the Lord**” (Col. 3:17). “**Word**” here includes prayer. Just before leaving the earth,

Jesus used the expression **“in that day”** twice in connection with **“prayer,”** referring to the time he would no longer be with them, and that they (in that day), to (1) No longer address Him, (2) They should ask the Father, (3) In the name of Jesus, and (4) He would not be praying to the Father for them, but they would be praying to the Father themselves. He had previously declared that they should ask in His **“name”** (John 14:13,14). Apostolic confirmation states we are to **“give thanks unto God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”** (Eph. 5:20). We have long observed that denominational folks pray TO God **“in the name of God,”** and TO Jesus **“in the name of Jesus”**—an absurdity.

My opponent, **Beta**, argues that Christians can scripturally **“pray to Jesus.”** He misapplies several NT passages to **“prove”** his case. The first passage He uses is in Acts 7, where Stephen has just preached an inspired (by the Holy Spirit) message, and was **“full of the Holy Ghost”** (vs. 55). After being stoned, he saw Jesus **“standing”** at God’s right hand, and says, **“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit”** and **“Lay not this sin to their charge”** (vss. 59, 60). He recognized Jesus, possibly from an earlier acquaintance, as in Acts 1:15. At any rate, he recognized Him, and saw Him **“standing”** (not seated at God’s right hand in his position of authority as king). Note also that there is no reference to **“the name of Christ”** when he spoke TO Him, as we are careful to do today when we pray, as Jesus authorizes. This was indeed a very special occasion, where inspiration had occurred and with Jesus’ very presence, before the throne of God. Hardly a good setting for an example to us in the matter of offering and receiving answer to prayer. If one today were to (1) Be inspired, (2) Being full of the Holy Ghost, (3) Be stoned to death for it, (4) See heaven opened, and Jesus **“standing”** at God’s right hand, who would say he should not address Jesus? Such would surely not be classified as a **“prayer.”**

The second **“proof-text”** from **Beta** is 2 Cor. 12:7,8, where Paul besought the Lord three times to remove his thorn. Now, we are in a context of **“visions and revelations”** (vs. 1), and Paul has heard words that were unlawful for him to utter. He spoke to the **“Lord,”** but it is not established that he was speaking to **“Jesus,”** though His name is mentioned twice in the context. **“Grace”** is usually associated with **“God”** (Tit. 2:11). Bear in mind, Paul had already been acquainted with Jesus, and had conversation with Him (Acts 9:1-6). Was that communication a **“prayer,”** when Saul made a request, and received a direct, verbal **“answer”** from Jesus?? In 2 Cor., Paul does receive a verbal answer, that His **“grace”** was sufficient for him. This was very likely the occasion when Paul received the revelation of the gospel (Gal. 1:11; Eph. 3:3). At any rate, it was a direct interchange between the Lord and an inspired servant and not a normal **“prayer”** situation. If so, can we expect direct, vocal answers to our prayers today? Again, this was a miraculous situation, and not a setting for teaching us about how we are to pray.

The 3rd **“proof-text”** **Beta** offers is Acts 1:24, 25, where the disciples asked the **“Lord”** to show them whom He was choosing to replace Judas. It was the Father who chose and gave the apostles to Jesus (John 17: 6, 9, 24), and they were chosen by God (Acts 10:41), and even God chose Paul (Acts 22:14). The one addressed was the **“Lord,”** and He is once identified as the Father of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:23-30). Since they had been told not to ask him anything directly after His departure, but to address the Father, this must have been what they were doing here. Again, an unprovable example of one **“praying to Jesus.”**

The fourth **“proof-text”** **Beta** offers is Rev. 22:20 (that he only alludes to), where John has just heard Jesus address him directly, and verbally, that He is going to come quickly, and John simply says, **“Even so, come Lord Jesus.”** Actually, we cannot know for sure, whether John said what he did, to the Lord at that time, or it was part of what John wrote afterward, when He wrote the entire book, with reference to whatever coming is discussed in the book, as He came in judgment upon the whore and the beast. Again, an unprovable **“example”** of how we can pray to Jesus today.

The fifth **“proof-text”** **Beta** offers is 1 Tim. 1:12, where Paul wrote, **“I thank Christ...”** for putting him into the ministry. The text does not mean that Paul did so in a prayer, but that he was **“thankful,”** or **“grateful”** for what the Lord had done. A similar Greek term is used in Heb.12:28, where it is translated **“let us have grace.”** When I might say to some person, **“I am thankful to the Lord”** for you, that does not describe how I might have expressed my thoughts to God, or that I was **“praying”** when I was telling you. I may have expressed my thanks to God, in the name of Christ. I can say every day, **“I thank God for you,”** meaning that I am always generally thankful for that individual. The passage simply holds gratitude to the Lord. If it does mean he did it in prayer, it surely was in harmony with the Lord’s will for prayer, which would have been to the Father, in the name of the Lord—which prayer included Jesus as the mediator. I often say, **“I am thankful for my parents,”** but they are now deceased, and I am not **“Praying”** to them, and did not **“pray”** to them when they were alive.

The sixth **“proof-text”** of **Beta** is Acts 22:17, where Paul fell into a **“trance”** as he prayed, and the Lord spoke directly and verbally to him. Just because he saw Jesus, does not mean he had been praying to Him. Peter fell into a trance in Acts 10:10-12, and saw beasts, birds and creatures, but that doesn’t mean he prayed to them. Daniel once had been praying to God (Dan. 9:4), and had a visit from **“Gabriel,”** an angel. Does that mean he had been praying to Gabriel??

The 7th **“proof-text”** by **Beta** is 1 John 5:13,14. **Beta** claims that the **“he”** and **“him”** of the text refers to **“Jesus”** who hears us. The context actually begins with God (vs. 11), who gives **“life”** (through Jesus Christ, who is parenthetically described in verses 12-13). In verse 14, he returns to

BETA'S SECOND AFFIRMATIVE

God, as the One who hears us when we “ask” (Jam. 1:5), and He is the one who “gives life” to those who do not sin unto death (vs. 16). Also, John says He is the One who gives “boldness,” who is the Lord (the Father of Jesus, Acts 4:29; 1 John 3:20, 21). The *ASV*, *NASB*, and *RSV*, have “God” in the text of 1 John 5:15, 16.

The word “ask” is found three times in the context of 1 John 5:11-15, with reference to the “life” given by Him. First, we ask the One who has a “will” regarding prayer, vs. 14; (cf Mat. 26:39; Jam. 4:15). Second, we ask the one who “hears” prayer, vs. 14,15; cf John 9:31; 1 Pet. 3:12). Third, we ask of “him” (vs. 14), who is “God,” (vs. 16; cf *ASV*, *NASB*, *RSV*). (God is the One who “gives” that eternal life, as stated in verses 11 and 16).

So, the entire context is about God who does things in and through Jesus Christ. Again, **Beta**, you are stretching to get a “prayer” to Jesus out of what John wrote.

Beta, it is best to get truth from the text itself, rather than some well-known preacher who happens to agree with you. **Beta**, remember this:

1) Prayer is to be to the Father, in the name of Jesus. (Mat. 6:9; John 14:13,14)

2) If prayer to Jesus is proper, then it would be proper to pray to him, “in the name of the Father.” But where did the Father ever authorize believers to pray to Jesus??

Beta, what you need to do is give us approved examples of one praying to Jesus when no miracle, trance, vision, or revelation is taking place.

In closing, I wish to leave some questions for you to give answer to in your next affirmative.

1. What is the difference between “praise” and “prayer”?
2. What is meant by “praying in the name of Jesus”?
3. What do you teach and practice in regard to this?
4. Is it scriptural to pray to the Holy Spirit?
5. Is it sinful to ever address an angel?
6. Was Saul praying when he said, “What shall I do Lord?”?
7. Was Jesus’ answer evidence that He answers us directly and verbally?
8. When anyone addresses Jesus, is it always a prayer?
9. Can one praise the Lord (or anyone else) without it being a prayer?
10. Was the Roman centurion praying when he made a request of Jesus?

Beta, it is a pleasure to discuss these serious matters with you. Please give even a brief answer to the questions above. If you don’t answer them, I will answer them for you, and explain the consequences of whatever answer you give. I am awaiting your second affirmative.

Sincerely, **DELTA**

Brethren, I find it a joy to be able to bring to you my second affirmative argument. Let me show you what **Delta** believes. Jesus is not only the Son of God, but he is God. He is eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient and immutable. He is equal to God in every way. Indeed, our Lord is to be worshipped! Now get this: **Delta** believes we are to worship Jesus, and see Him as God, but we can’t pray to Him! He is one of the Godhead three, but we cannot pray to Him. That doesn’t make sense.

You will note in the last part of my first affirmative argument, I stated that **Delta** will have to choose between the apostles sinning by praying to Jesus, or that the passages that we looked at are no longer applicable to us today. Rather than addressing either of these choices, **Delta** chose to believe that there was nothing going on other than a conversation between the apostles and Jesus. Stephen was just having a conversation with Jesus because he saw Him. The Apostles had a number of conversations with Jesus, and never “prayed” to Him; even though that is the word the Bible uses to tell us what they did (Acts 1:24).

Now in answer to the arguments that **Delta** opens with. He uses Mat. 6:6ff to show that Jesus teaches us to pray to “...Our Father which art in heaven...” First of all, Jesus does not say in this passage that we are to pray “ONLY” to the Father. This is the position that **Delta** is attempting to prove. Secondly, Jesus is with the disciples, so there is no need to pray to Him. While He was on this earth, they were able to talk with Him. Thirdly, in this model prayer, Jesus says to pray “...Thy kingdom come...” But now that the kingdom has come, we no longer pray for that. In the same manner, now that Jesus has entered into heaven and is sitting on the throne of God, we can also pray to him. Fourthly, is **Delta** trying to say Mat. 6:6ff is teaching us everything there is about prayer? Certainly there are other teachings about prayer that are not found in this passage. And fifthly, I have never said that we are not to pray to the Father. I believe we should pray to God the Father.

Next, **Delta** argues from John 14:13, 14. I agree that we are to pray to the Father through Jesus, or as Paul puts it in Eph. 5:20, “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This teaches us that the only way we can pray to God the Father, is through Jesus. We cannot approach the throne of God except through our mediator, that is through Jesus. But **Delta** did not look at verse 14. It reads “If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.” (*NASV*). Note the word “ME.” We can ask Jesus (that is who the Me is), anything. I’m aware that the *ASV* and *KJV* do not read this way. But the *ASV* has a footnote that states “Many ancient authorities add me.” Frank Pack states that this refers to the “oldest and best manuscripts.” (*The Living Word Commentary*, vol. 5, pg. 62). The context bears out that one can ask Jesus because He is the one that answers the prayer. Twice it says “...that will

I do...” So the very verse that **Delta** uses lets us know that we can pray to Jesus. I do not know, nor care, what the denominational folks do. The important thing is, what does the Bible say. Is **Delta** going to start entering the church building through the windows because the denomination enter through the doors of their buildings?

Delta misses the point that I made concerning Stephen. If Stephen is obeying what Jesus commanded us to do in prayer, he must pray as Jesus tells us to. It doesn't matter if Stephen can see Jesus or not. When he prayed, he was required to pray as the Bible tells us to pray. Note also that Stephen saw **“Jesus standing on the right hand of God...”** (Acts 7:55). That implies that he also saw God the Father. Yet he prays to Jesus. If Stephen saw God standing on the right hand of Jesus, shouldn't he pray to the Father in order to obey the commands of the Bible? If indeed the Bible commands us to pray “only” to the Father.

Next, **Delta** wants us to believe that in 2 Cor. 12:7, 8 Paul is carrying on a conversation with Jesus. But **Delta** does not address the fact that the Bible says Paul **“besought”** Jesus. That is he prayed to Him three times. Then **Delta** contradicts himself by stating that on the one hand Paul had a conversation with Jesus, then he states that we don't know who the Lord is in this passage even though His name is mentioned twice. Oh what tangled webs we weave! **Delta**, you need to chose one and stick with it. And then he asks “can we expect direct, vocal answers to our prayers today?” Does this imply that when we pray to God, He doesn't answer our prayers? Of course God answers our prayers. Just not verbally as he did with Paul on this occasion. But the passage still teaches that Paul prayed to Jesus!

In Acts 1:24, 25 **Delta** wants us to believe that “the Lord” refers to God the Father instead of Jesus our Lord. But note verse 21 speaks of the “Lord Jesus,” then they pray to the Lord in verse 24. They are praying to Jesus. **Delta** should have gone back to John 15:16. There he would learn that Jesus is the one who “chose” the apostles. If He chose the other twelve apostles, it only follows that He chose Matthias as well. Yes, the Father “gave” the apostles to Jesus, but Jesus is the one who “chose” them.

Concerning 1 Tim. 1:12, are we to believe that when Paul says he was thankful for the church at Ephesus (Eph. 1: 15,16) he wasn't praying? Paul tells us he was praying when he thanked God for them. Paul was thankful for all the churches he worked with as well as the individuals. He prayed for them. As Paul prayed, he thanked God. and on this occasion, he prayed to Jesus.

As to Acts 22:17, **Delta** needs to look closer at these passages. When Peter fell into a trance in Acts 10, he spoke to the Lord, not to the beasts (vs. 14). In Acts 22, Jesus is the one speaking to him. We know this from verses 18,19. **Delta** wants us to believe that they are just carrying on a conversation in some passages, then in other passages they are not.

He needs to stay consistent with his conversation theory, no matter how ridiculous it is!

I believe the passage that is totally devastating to **Delta's** position is 1 John 5:13-15. There is no doubt that John is talking about the “Son of God” in verse 13. Verses 14 and 15 then refers to Him, that is the Son of God. How does **Delta** handle this? He states that verse 13 is a “parenthetical” statement. That the Him goes back to verse 11 where it talks about God. Who can believe it! The *ASV* doesn't have any parentheses there. Neither does any other translation that I know of. In fact, the *ASV* has a space between verses 12 and 13. This gives the idea that verse 13 starts a new paragraph. The context is that the Son of God is the one we pray to. No amount of finagling will ever get **Delta** away from this.

Now to answer **Delta's** questions:

1. What is the difference between “praise” and “prayer”? Answer: Prayer can include praise. For example Mat. 6:9 **“Our Father who art in heaven...”** But not all praise is prayer.

2. What is meant by “praying in the name of Jesus”? A: By his authority.

3. What do you teach and practice in regard to this? A: To what? the debate? I teach the same thing **Delta** does. We are to pray to the Father with Jesus as our mediator. But we can still pray to Jesus and thank Him for the things he has done for us. During the Lord's Supper, I see no problem with praying: *“Father, I thank thee for thine unspeakable gift; and Jesus, I thank thee for being willing to die for me.”* (As Windell Winkler suggests we can pray.)

4. Is it scriptural to pray to the Holy Spirit? A: there are no examples of prayer to the Holy Spirit, but there is to Jesus. That's what this debate is about.

5. Is it sinful to ever address an angel? A: Yes. Gal. 1:8, 9; Rev. 22:9. Is **Delta** implying that Jesus is equal to the angels?

6. Was Saul praying when he said, “What shall I do Lord?”? A: No.

7. Was Jesus' answer evidence that He answers us directly and verbally? A: No.

8. When anyone addresses Jesus, is it always a prayer? A: Always is a big word. If we address Jesus in prayer, it is a prayer.

9. Can one praise the Lord (or anyone else) without it being a prayer? A: Yes

10. Was the Roman centurion praying when he made a request of Jesus? Which Roman centurion are you talking about? Cornelius in Acts 10? That was an angel of God, vs. 3, an angel vs. 7; a holy angel, vs. 22. Is **Delta** implying that Jesus is on the same level as the angels?

DELTA'S SECOND NEGATIVE

Beta tells how I, **Delta**, believe in the Godhead three, and that it makes sense that we pray to Jesus. What about the Holy Spirit—should we pray to Him? Surely, Jesus can be worshiped, and He is when we praise Him in song. **Beta** next argues that though we are taught to pray to the Father, that doesn't mean "only" to Him, but where is the teaching that says we can pray also to the Son? Christ has "**one body**," but does that mean it is not the "only" body, or church? No, **Beta**, I am not saying that Matthew 6 teaches us everything about prayer, but Luke's account does say, "**When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven**" (Luke 11:2). Now to examine further the claims of **Beta**. I shall use bold Roman numerals to identify each topic or paragraph.

I. Now to John 14:13, 14. In vs. 12, Jesus speaks of "**when I go to the Father**," that corresponds with John 16:23, where He said "**in that day ye shall ask the Father**," and "**in that day ye shall ask in my name**" (vs. 26), and He (the Son) would "**not pray the Father**" for them, suggesting they would not be asking Him (the Son) anything, but go directly to the Father, and God (the Father) would give it to them. So, just how could the word "me" belong in the text? Strange that all the translating scholars of the *KJV*, *NKJ*, and *ASV* did not see that? **Beta** bases his argument on a margin note of the *ASV* which says that some manuscripts add "me." But, how could the disciples ask "him" anything, when He said, "**ye shall ask me nothing**" (16:23)? A problem for you, **Beta**, and we will not let you forget it, though I predict you will try. Strange indeed, that if we pray to the mediator through the mediator, we spin our wheels, especially when the mediator says we are not to ask Him anything directly after He goes to the Father. To suggest that one should or can scripturally pray to a mediator and through a mediator, is an absurdity, for a mediator is "one." In Galatians 3:20, Paul wrote, "**Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.**" Now, a mediator must work between two parties—in this case, God and man, "**For there is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus**" (1 Tim. 2:5). Likewise, it is a contradiction, because in another passage, Jesus said that after His ascension into heaven, disciples would ask Him absolutely "**nothing**" (John 16:23). Whom will you accept: Jesus or **Beta**?

II. In no "proof-texts" **Beta** uses of events after Pentecost that he calls "prayer" is there any reference to them "praying" or even "asking." The words are not used. But, it doesn't matter, for every one of his "proof-texts" involve events in a trance, a vision, or in revelations. These were miraculous events where the Lord communicated with men who were inspired of the Spirit, or were "in the Spirit." It is folly to argue that these cases show how we can follow their example and thus "pray to Jesus." If they open this door, they also open the door to the Lord speaking directly to saints and sinners today apart from the gospel message. Just

to call these occasions "prayer" doesn't make them prayer; just as men calling same sex-unions "marriage" does not make them marriages in the sight of God.

III. **Beta** admits that when Stephen prayed, "**he was required to pray as the Bible also tells us to pray**," yet turns right around and said "he prays to Jesus," which Jesus never taught—but taught just the opposite. Regarding Paul in 2 Corinthians 11, **Beta** says I believe Paul was carrying on a conversation with Jesus. I said no such thing. **Beta** is the one who said it was "Jesus." Well, I do know this, that Paul himself said, that we are to give thanks to God "**always, for all things**" (Eph. 5:20), and "**in everything by prayer... let your requests be made known unto God**" and that the God of peace shall keep their minds through Christ Jesus (Phi. 4:6, 7). Does not "all things," and "everything" include such things as Paul besought the Lord to do, if 2 Corinthians 11 was a prayer? There is no proof that the "**Lord**" in 2 Cor. 11 was Jesus, but even if it was, that was a time of revelation and vision, where inspiration occurred. That is significant. It doesn't matter if Christ is mentioned in the overall context, for He is often mentioned with the Father, when God does all things through Christ. **Beta** says the word "**besought**" suggests a petition to God. Indeed? When Paul "**besought**" Timothy to abide at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1:3), was it a prayer?

IV. **Beta** argues that it was Christ who had "chosen" the apostles, so it must have been Him who did the choosing in Acts 1:24, 25. Ultimately, it was God who chose all the apostles, for Jesus Himself said that they were the men the Father gave Him (John 17:6), and "**those that thou gavest me**" (vs. 11). But, it was God who "chose" Saul, even if Christ appeared to Him (Acts 22:14). Ultimately, what Jesus did was the Father's will, and it just might be argued that since Saul was chosen by God after Jesus ascended into heaven, it was God who also chose Matthias, since it was after the ascension. It should be noted that the Lord may have been the Father, for the "**Lord**" in the very next prayer of the disciples (also to the "**Lord**") was clearly to the Father (Acts 4:24, 26, 27, 29, 30). Dispute this **Beta**. If God was involved in the choosing, why could not this be a reference to Him?

V. **Beta** states that 1 Timothy 1:12 is a prayer to Jesus. However, he writes of the "**grace of our Lord**" in verse 14, along with faith and love "**in Christ Jesus.**" So, the "**grace**" was from the Lord, which was "**in Christ.**" Apparently two members of the Godhead are mentioned here. Then, he concludes that "**honor and glory**" are to the "**wise God**" (vs. 17).

VI. **Beta** thinks 1 John 5:13-15 is devastating to **Delta**. It is devastating, not to **Delta**, but to **Beta**. John begins this context in vs. 11 by saying that it was God who has "**given... eternal life.**" Then, he states that this life is in the Son, and rightfully the Son is referred to several times in verses 11-13. But, the kicker is this: The one we "ask" is not the Son of God who is just referred to, but to the one who gives life

“in the Son.” We are to **“ask”** life (which God gives, vs. 11) when one repents, or does not **“sin unto death.”** In 1 John 1:5-7, God through **“Jesus Christ his Son,”** is the one who **“is faithful and just to forgive us”** of our sins. Then, in 1 John 2:1, we see that Jesus is our Advocate in our petitions to the Father. So, God gives life to the faithful, and forgives those who sin not unto death.

VII. Now to the questions I asked **Beta**.

1. I asked for the difference between “praise and prayer.” He answered that “not all praise is prayer.” This means we can “praise” Jesus without “praying to Him. Right **Beta**? We are authorized to sing praises to the Lord, but not authorized to pray to Him. **Beta** admits there is a difference between the two actions.

2. I asked what it meant to “pray in the name of Jesus,” and he answered that it means to pray “by His authority.” Right, we are to pray what Christ authorized, and He only authorized prayer “to the Father,” and that we are to ask Him (Jesus) nothing after He went back to the Father.

3. I asked what he (**Beta**) taught and practice regarding “this.” He quibbled, as if he did not know what I was talking about. Well, I was talking about the question just before that, regarding “praying in the name of Jesus.”

4. I asked him if it was scriptural to pray to the Holy Spirit. He said there is no example of it, but earlier he said it is absurd that we cannot pray to all the members of the Godhead. Now, he would have to say we can pray to the Holy Spirit.

5. I asked if is a sin to ever address an angel. He said “yes.” Yet, John addressed an angel in the book of Revelation. Was it sinful? Certainly not! But, the fact that he did address an angel, did not mean he was praying to him. Just so, any words John uttered to the Lord in Revelation does not mean he was engaging in prayer.

6. I asked if Saul was praying when he said, **“What shall I do Lord?”** **Beta** said “No.” Why not, **Beta**? He was speaking to Him, and that would be just as much a prayer as Stephen speaking to Him in Acts 7, or Paul speaking to the Lord (Father, or Jesus?) in 2 Corinthians 12. Consistency, where art thou?

7. I asked **Beta** if Jesus’ answer to Saul was evidence of the Lord’s answering “us” directly and verbally, and **Beta** said “No.” Why not? It certainly could be if it was a prayer, but **Beta** said it was not a prayer. True, it was not a prayer, and neither was Stephen’s words to Jesus a prayer.

8. I asked if anytime one addresses Jesus, is it always a prayer? He beat around the bush on that, saying when it is called a prayer, it is. Well, the so-called “prayers” he has used as “proof-texts” are not called prayers in the scriptures, but only by **Beta**. We should never call something a prayer unless scripture says it is.

9. I asked if one can praise the Lord or anyone without it being a prayer. He said “Yes.” Good, anytime we praise Jesus for something, whether about Him, or in song, it may not be a prayer, and **Beta** agrees with that.

10. I asked **Beta** if the Roman centurion was praying when he made a request of Jesus. He asked “which Roman centurion?” **Beta**, I was talking about the only centurion that is said to have made a request of Jesus (Mat. 8:5-8). Of course, he was a “Roman” centurion, for that terminology belonged to him, or any other centurion. I do not know of any other centurion that made a request of Jesus. **Beta** began talking about Cornelius of Acts 10. Why didn’t **Beta** even allude to the one that made a request of Jesus—was he afraid he might have to call it a prayer?

We await **Beta**’s response.

BETA’S THIRD AFFIRMATIVE

It is a pleasure to help **Delta** see the truth on what the Bible teaches on this all-important issue. Now concerning **Delta**’s first paragraph. I am shocked that **Delta** got out of the fact that Jesus is God, that we can pray to the Holy Spirit! I never said that, and the fact is, I point out that there are no examples of anyone praying to the Holy Spirit in the Bible. But there are many examples of prayers offered to Jesus. **Delta** still has not answered properly what we find in Acts 1:24. The exact words found in verse 24 are: **“And they prayed... Lord...”** If this passage said, “and they prayed Holy Spirit,” then I would say we could pray to Him. But it says they prayed to the Lord. How does **Delta** handle this? He wants us to believe that the Lord here is referring to the Father. First concerning this, the context bears out they are praying to Jesus. Note verse 21 tells us it is **“Lord Jesus.”** You cannot take a passage and say that it is talking about the Father when the context shows it is the Lord Jesus. Secondly, anytime a passage talks about God, it is correct to assume it is talking about the Father unless the context brings out that it is the Son. Anytime the context uses the word Lord, it is correct to assume that it is Jesus unless the context tells us differently. **Delta** says this is talking about the Father, because he wrongly assumes that prayer can be given only to the Father. His reasoning is similar to the denominational preacher who says the Bible teaches we are saved by faith only then interprets “baptism saves you” by saying no it doesn’t.

I. Now to John 14:14. This passage says **“If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”** (*NASV*). (See the second point in **Beta**’s second affirmative) concerning the *me* in this passage, Wayne Jackson quotes Bruce Metzger who is one of the leading authorities on the NT Greek language. This is what Wayne writes:

Bruce Metzger has noted, “The word *me* is adequately supported.” He cites some of the oldest and best manuscript witnesses, and adds that “*me* seems to be appropriate in view of its correlation with ego [“I”] later in the verse.”

Another Greek scholar, Hugo McCord, Th.D. translates this verse like this: “I will do anything you ask me in my name.” All the evidence speaks for the fact that the newer translations are more accurate in this verse.

Delta needs to take John 14-16 in its proper context. In 16:23 Jesus says “**And in that day ye shall ask me no question.**” The reason for this is they will know the things Jesus is telling them. How? The Holy Spirit will reveal all things to them! Go back to 14:26 and find these words: “**But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.**” The “suggesting” that **Delta** gets from this passage is not correct. Jesus is telling them, you have many questions, but when you receive the Holy Spirit, those questions will be answered for you, so you have no need to ask me anything. He is not saying they cannot and will not pray to him!

Now I have shown data that substantiates the translation that I am using. **Delta** loves to add words such as pray only to the Father, you shall not ask Him anything directly, and the disciples would ask Him absolutely “nothing.” But the fact is, there is not one shred of evidence to establish his “additional” words!

Next **Delta** wants to make you think that since Jesus is our mediator, we cannot talk to Him. But look a little closer at Galatians 3:20. In fact go one verse before this. God gave the law through His mediator, that is Moses. Now note how Moses mediated between God and man. God would speak to His people through Moses. But how did the children of Israel speak to God? Through their mediator Moses. Now in **Delta’s** world, the children of Israel could not speak to Moses as their mediator, they had to speak “only” to God. But look back in Ex. 20:19. The Israelites said “**...Speak thou with us...**” They spoke to their mediator. No **Delta**, this is not “a problem for... **Beta**,” this is a problem for you! Yes Jesus is our mediator between God and man. God has spoken to us through the words of Jesus, and we can speak to Jesus in order to get to God.

Point II has already been answered, so let’s go on to point III. **Delta** still misses the whole argument about Acts 7. Stephen’s words are the same as the prayer Jesus made on the cross. If **Delta** is right, Stephen should have said those words to the Father rather than Jesus. According to **Delta’s** teaching, he could only pray to the Father. According to the Bible, Stephen prayed to Jesus.

And, as to 2 Corinthians 12 (not 11), **Delta** did say they were carrying on a conversation. Note his third paragraph in his first negative. He uses the word conversation in the 6th line concerning Acts 9:1-6 with the implication that this is one too. Then he calls it a “direct interchange between the Lord...” Where is **Delta** going with his “give thanks to God ‘always, for all things’” argument. Is he saying we can praise Jesus (1st question) but we can not thank him? We

shall see.

Point IV, **Delta** doesn’t address the fact that the Bible uses the word “**chose**” concerning both the 12 apostles and Matthias (John 15:16; Acts 1:24). Jesus chose, on his own accord, the 12 apostles. The Father gave them to him.

In point V **Delta** wants us to believe that in 1 Timothy 1:12 Paul is talking about Jesus and the Father as well. Who can believe it! Read it again. 1 Timothy 1:12, “**I thank him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, ...**” Is this really what **Delta** is trying to tell us! The Him is the Father, and then Christ Jesus is our Lord? Who can believe it!

Point VI, one more time let me point out that the Him in 1 John 5:14 goes back to the Son of God in verse 13. **Delta** doesn’t like that because it specifically tells us we can pray to Jesus. He has tried every way in the world to get around this, but the more he tries to say it is talking about God in verses 11 and 16, the more foolish it sounds. Note these verses: “**...unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the boldness which we have toward him...**” Who can read that and believe the “Him” is talking about any one but Jesus?

Now to the questions.

1. **Delta** is getting closer to saying we can pray to Jesus. We praise Jesus in prayer as well. (See questions below).
2. We have the authority of Jesus by His words in 1 John 5 and apostolic example in the other passages we looked at.
3. I teach we pray to the Father through Jesus. That’s the only way we can approach the throne of God. We can pray to Jesus because of the things we are looking at in this debate.
5. **Beta** believes he made a point by using “address” instead of prayer. Doesn’t make a difference. John never prayed to an angel. The passages quoted still show that we are not to worship the angels. We do worship Jesus, and we do pray to Jesus.
6. In Acts 9, there is no doubt that Paul and Jesus are speaking with one another. The words of Paul are recorded, and the words of Jesus are recorded. Where are the words of Jesus in Acts 7 when Stephen supposedly is talking to Jesus? **Delta** still can’t make up his mind if 2 Corinthians 12 is a conversation, or if the Lord is the Father rather than Jesus. But the Bible should make up his mind for him. Jesus is our Lord.
7. **Delta** still doesn’t seem to know the difference between the days of the miraculous and the days we live in. The Father and the Son speaks to us through the word of God, and we speak to them through prayer.
8. Does **Delta** not know the difference between when he is praying to Jesus and when he is not? Is **Delta** saying it is alright to “speak” to Jesus, but not to pray to Him
9. See below.

10. Now that I know **Delta** is talking about Matthew 8:5-8, let me answer his question with a question. If I were sick and I went to Jesus “beseeching him” to help me, am I praying to Jesus by doing that?

Questions for **Delta**:

1. Do you sing the following songs? Is it alright to speak the words to these songs as well as sing them? *I am thine O' Lord; Savior Breath an Evening Blessing; Be With Me Lord.*

2. Is it alright to praise Jesus? Is it alright to beseech Jesus? Is it alright to give thanks to Jesus?

DELTA'S THIRD NEGATIVE

We are nearing the end of our exchange, and we will follow with a shorter “Summation,” with **Beta** going first, and myself being last. Now I shall answer **Beta's** third affirmative. He begins by saying he is “shocked” that I would argue that since I agree that Jesus is God, that it meant we can pray to the Holy Spirit. **Beta** is good at twisting words around. It is **Beta** who is in trouble here. He argued that since Jesus is deity (along with the Father), that it is absurd to say we should not pray to Him as well as the Father. All I did was ask **Beta** if we can pray to the Holy Spirit, since He is also “deity.” I do not believe it follows that just because one is deity, that it automatically means we should “pray” to that One. **Beta** has either misread what I said, or is desperate to score a point. But, he struck out.

Beta said we have no example of one praying to the Holy Spirit. My response is, “Neither do we have any examples of one praying to Jesus,” no matter what **Beta** and a few select brethren have written, who are “brainwashed” by the practices of denominationalism. The so-called examples are not prayers at all, but would better be described as parts of visions, revelations and inspiration, where deity dealt with special persons in the age of miracles, where God's will was being placed into the hands of inspired writers in special situations, in special communication. The three members of the Godhead have separate roles, and we should not confuse them. It is God who gives life, and the Spirit who inspires scripture, and Jesus who was sacrificed for us, and has become our one mediator in our approach to the Father.

Beta chides me for thinking “Lord” in Acts 1:24 is the Father, instead of Jesus. He says this, since he said Jesus “chose” the apostles, so He has to be the “Lord” in this passage. He admits that it was God who gave Jesus the apostles, but Jesus “chose” them. Would not this mean the Father had something to do with the “choosing”? The very next time a “prayer” is directed to the Lord, as in Acts 4—just 3 chapters later, it is to the “Lord,” who just happens to be to “God” (vs. 24), “**the Lord and...his Christ**” (vs. 26), who was the Father of one “**holy child Jesus**” (vs. 30). So, the “**Lord**” in Acts 1 is very likely to be the same Lord—God the Father.

In Acts 1:20 is a quote from Psa. 69:25 and 109:8, where references are made to God, the Lord, or Lord God. David

was addressing God in those quotes, and Peter quotes the passages, and then addresses the Lord in his application. It would be very wrong to take a passage addressing God in one instance, and when the same passage is used again, to apply it to someone else—Jesus. This “**Lord**” is the one who sees and knows the hearts of all men, and the passage references 1 Samuel 16:7 (cf Heb. 4:12,13). He is the one who “**swore**” regarding the promises of the covenant, and declared to be God in Hebrews 6:17.

Beta then quotes me a couple of brotherhood “scholars” to “prove” that the word me belongs in John 14:14, where it makes Jesus use “me” in reference to future prayers. Wasn't one of these brethren the one who denies that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God? **Beta** cannot find a standard translation that puts “me” into the passage, but finds one that has a marginal note reading “Many ancient authorities add *me*” (*ASV*). Again it is absurd and contradictory to put “me” into the passage. Obscure or difficult passages should be examined in light of other plain passages on the same subject. It is absurd for Jesus to have said, “**Ask me in my name,**” for the very idea of “name” is authority for obtaining something from another in “the name” or by the permission of another. Also, it is very contradictory, for in another passage Jesus plainly declared that “**in that day**” (after He goes back to the Father), they were to “**ask me nothing**” and were to “**ask the Father**” (John 16:23). Readers may note that **Beta** no longer chided me for saying Jesus “did not say ONLY”, to suggest that that meant we can pray to Him (Jesus) as well as the Father. I wonder if **Beta** recognized that such was bad reasoning—the kind that denominations use to justify the use of instrumental music because God did not say “only” singing, we can add instruments to what He authorized.

Beta thinks he has something on the “mediator” argument. He does indeed—he has a problem. He reasons that since I mentioned that Moses was a mediator and the people could speak directly to him, that this means since Jesus is our mediator, we can speak directly to Him. Note several differences, however. (1) Moses was still on earth as a mediator, while Jesus had to go to heaven to be ours. (2) The people couldn't speak directly to God in that age, so Moses had to speak to God for them, but now we can speak directly to God, for Jesus authorizes it. (3) Moses never authorized them to speak directly to God in his (Moses') name. (4) Moses never authorized anyone to speak to God “in his name,” but Jesus does. (5) Moses never told that after he died, they should begin speaking to the Father by his (Moses') authority. (6) Moses never functioned as a mediator “**at the right hand of God,**” as Jesus is today. (7) Israel never asked God “anything” in Moses' name, for he was still with them, and neither did the disciples ever ask God anything “**in the name of Jesus**” while they were with Him on earth—while in His presence. So, Israel never asked God for anything before, during or after Moses ministry—as long as he was alive. So, **Beta's** parallel breaks down.

Strangely, **Beta** says “we can speak to Jesus to get to God.” If it is only a “can” do it, and is not necessary, then why do it at all? Even the moderator of the Freed-Hardeman lectures suggested that if we don’t agree that Acts 7 is a prayer, the best thing to do is just go on praying to the Father in the name of Jesus. In fact, Jesus once stated that if disciples “**ask in His name,**” He, Jesus, would not petition the Father for anything (John 16:26). The only safe and right course is to address our prayers to the Father, “in all things,” “**in the name of Jesus Christ.**” This course is always right.

Beta “nibbled” again about Acts 7, but made no additional point. He did the same with 2 Corinthians 12 on Paul’s beseeching the “**Lord**” (who is the author of “**grace**”), but says nothing new. He alluded to what I said about Acts 9. He cannot answer my point there, as it is a case of one conversing with Jesus, but **Beta** says it was not a prayer. HmMMM. Regarding 1 Timothy 1:12, **Beta** still claims it was a prayer to Jesus. All Paul was doing was giving credit to Christ for putting him into the ministry, but no prayer is recorded. When I say that I “thank God” for my wife, that does not mean I am praying at that instant.

Again **Beta** goes to 1 John 5:14, claiming that since Jesus is “mentioned” in the text, that it means we are to “pray” to Him. The subject is “eternal life,” which God gives (vs. 11), and that this life is “**in His Son,**” and those “**in the Son**” are the ones who have this life, but when we “pray” in behalf of sinners, the one who gives eternal life (God) will again “**give life**” if they “**sin not unto death**” (vss.11, 12, 13, 15, 16). Clearly, the asking is to the Father, for if we “**ask the Father**” for anything, it is to be to Him “**in the name of the Son**” (John 16:23, 26). Jesus once stated that if a disciple asks anything “**in his name,**” that He (Jesus) would not petition the Father for him. Read it **Beta**: “**At that day, ye shall ask in my name, and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you.**” So, it will not do any good to ask Jesus to petition God, for Jesus will not do it. His role as mediator is to make it possible for us to pray through Him, but the prayers to the Father do not get stopped with him, and forwarded on to the Father in due time. We have a direct line to the Father.

Beta rebukes me for adding the word “nothing” to the text of John 16:23,24. He wants to use obscure “authorities” to justify putting “me” into one passage, but then turns right around and chides me for relying on the margin of the *ASV* instead of the text itself, even though it is there in the *KJV* and *NKJV*. One time in the *ASV* it says “no question,” but the margin says, “Or, ask me nothing.” I am guessing that **Beta** is saying that we can pray to Jesus, but not ask any questions. Who can believe it!!

Beta ought to be a Jew, for he really likes the “Pass-over,” as he passed over some of my arguments. He passed over the plain statements of Jesus in John 14 and 16, but chose to quibble about the words “**me**” and “**nothing,**” to

muddy up the water. Now to his response to my question.

1. He says I must be getting close to the idea of praying to Jesus, because I say we can “praise” Him. Yet, in his first answer to the question as to the difference between praise and prayer, he stated, “But not all praise is prayer.” Right—so I can praise Jesus by speaking highly of Him, or in songs, but I am not to pray to Jesus.

2. He said nothing new in his answer to this question.

3. Here he stated that he taught, “we are to pray to the Father through Jesus. That’s the only way we can approach the throne of God.” Sounds like we have him converted. But, then he went on to say that we can still pray to Jesus. But, isn’t that another way to approach God? In one breath he says there is only one way to approach the Father, and in the next breath shows us another way. HmMMMM.

4. Apparently he agrees that one (like John) could “address” or speak to an angel, and it would not be praying to him. This is also true in addressing Jesus, as Stephen did. (This is shown in his presentation as number 5, but I have listed here as number 4. He made his remarks elsewhere about praying to the Holy Spirit.)

5. He admits, in his point number 6, that Saul was “speaking with” Jesus, but it was not a prayer in this case, but he says it was a prayer in Acts 7 with Stephen. Just a little bit inconsistent, isn’t it **Beta**?

6. In number 7, he says **Delta** doesn’t know the difference between events during the “miraculous” days and our time. Yes **Beta**, I do know the difference. That is the very reason I have emphasized that there is a difference between the communication between individuals when inspiration and visions occurred, than they are today.

7. **Beta** asks if I know the difference between when one

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is praying to Jesus, and when he is not. Yes **Beta**, I know the difference. Just as you admit Saul was only speaking to Jesus in Acts 9, but was not praying. I want you to see the difference.

8. Nothing new of significance on my question number 9, but in his first response to this question, he said “yes” (that there is a difference between “praise” and “prayer.” So, one can “praise” the Lord in song without them being “prayers.”

9. This dealt with the centurion of my question number 10. The implication that the centurion was “not” praying, just because he was “beseeching” Him. Glad to have that admission.

Then **Beta** asked me a couple of questions. First, “yes” I believe it is proper and right to praise Jesus in the songs he named. Second, it is all right to praise Jesus, so any words of praise or thanksgiving in the song would be appropriate.

Well, we are coming closer to ending this discussion. One more affirmative and negative each, then to the Summations. I sense that **Beta** is weakening, and getting nearer to admitting the truth. I believe in time that **Beta** will come around, even if he does not acknowledge such at the end of this debate. Let’s all keep an open mind to truth.

DELTA

BETA’S FOURTH AFFIRMATIVE

It is a pleasure to have been able to present the truth during this debate. This is the last Affirmative argument I will be making. After this, we will both give a summation. In this summation, neither I nor **Delta** will be able to add any new arguments. I do not have the space or time to address all of his arguments again. In this final Affirmative I am now giving, I will concentrate on the main arguments that **Delta** has given. I believe **Delta’s** main problem is his misunderstanding of John 16:23. Jesus tells them “**ye shall ask me no question.**” He does this because the Holy Spirit will give them this information. They do not need to ask Him anything. Yes he tells us to pray to the Father, but not pray “**ONLY**” to the Father.

I did not give up on the argument of “**ONLY**” as **Delta** suggests. And I did not chide him for putting “nothing” in the text. I chided him for putting the words “only, directly, and absolutely” in the text. **Delta** missed this argument just as he did all the others. To be clear, I am not the one that added the word “Me” to John 14:14. God did this! I showed him the evidence that puts “Me” in the text. How does **Delta** answer this? He defames the character of Hugo McCord. Shame on you! Any good debater knows when a person resorts to the tactic of defaming the character of others rather than answering the issue, it’s the same as admitting defeat. The answer he gives is that no “standard” translation includes the word “Me” in the text. Does he not know what the “S” stands for in *NASV*, *RSV* or *ESV*? **Delta** even tried to use the *RSV* and *NASV* in his first Affirmative. Look back at his answer to the

7th “proof-text” to see this is so. Then **Delta** tells us it is absurd for Jesus to say we can ask Him anything by His authority. Really? His is the authority we need to be using. Now note the *ASV* translation of this passage: “**If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do.**” Even if **Delta** were to prove the “Me” does not belong in this text, which he hasn’t done, the implication is there. Jesus says “**that will I do.**” The “I” implies the “Me.” **Delta** is silent on this point.

Delta also accuses me of doing the same thing that our denominational friends have done with Instrumental Music. But the parallel is not the same. We have stated over and over again for them to show just one passage that allows us to use instrumental music. If they could do this, then they would be correct in the use of instrumental music. But they are not able to give one example from the New Testament where instrumental music is used. If John 16:23, 24 was the only thing we had on this, then I would agree with **Delta**. **Delta** has claimed that “Neither do we have any examples of one praying to Jesus.” But I have shown many passages where prayer is offered to Jesus.

We do not have space to look at all of these passages again, so I will concentrate on one passage. It is a passage that tells us specifically that the Apostles prayed to the Lord. **Delta** opines “we do not have any examples of one praying to Jesus.” My answer to that is an emphatic, YES WE DO! **Delta** is so blinded by his belief that we can pray “Only” to the Father that he doesn’t see it. Let me now address the two arguments that **Delta** gives concerning this. We do not have time to look at all the passages. So let’s look at only two of them. First, he says the “Lord” is the Father. Note Acts 1:24 “**...they prayed...Lord...**” Vs. 21 shows the context is the Lord Jesus. **Delta’s** answer to this is Acts 4 uses the word Lord and it is talking about the Father. I don’t doubt that, because the context shows it to be the Father, just like the context of Acts 1 is talking about Jesus. In addition to this, **Delta** still doesn’t know the difference between “chose” and “give.” Let me give him an example. I “chose my wife, but it was her father that “gave” her to me. The Bible tells us that Jesus “chose” the apostles, (John 15:15). Acts 1:24 points out the Lord chose Matthias. Therefore, the Lord is Jesus.

I have mentioned several times that we need to look at the context to show who the “Lord” is talking about. Brother Guy N. Woods use to say “a text taken out of context becomes a pretext.” This is what **Delta** is guilty of. In Acts 2:1, we have an example of this principle. This verse, and the following verses, show us that the Holy Spirit fell on only the 12 apostles. It did not fall on the 120 (Acts 1:15), nor did it fall on the 500 men that saw Jesus all at once (1 Cor. 15:6). It certainly did not fall on everyone present on that day. The Holy Spirit fell only on the 12 Apostles. How do we know this? The “**they**” of 2:1 goes back to 1:26 where the 12 Apostles are mentioned. In the same way, we know that the “**Lord**” of 1:24 goes back to “**Lord Jesus**” of verse 21.

Delta also wants us to believe that since God (the Father) is in Psalms 69 and Psalms 109, this shows the “**Lord**” in Acts 1:24 is talking about the Father. Both of these Psalms are messianic passages. They have predictions about Jesus, and also predictions concerning the need to fill the void that was left by the death of Judas. There is no doubt that **Delta** is correct about these passages having been written by God. What **Delta** needs to realize is that the predictive prophecy only tells us What is going to happen in the future. It is not telling us Who is going to fulfil it. God tells us Judas’ place needs to be filled. He is not telling us the fact that the apostles and Jesus are the ones Who will fill this office. It took the apostles to ask the “**Lord**” to choose who would take the place of Judas. Both the apostles and Jesus fulfilled God’s prophecy.

The second argument that **Delta** gives is that, rather than praying to Jesus, those in the first century just carried on a conversation with Jesus. Stephen only had a talk with Jesus just like Saul did in Acts 9. But in Acts 9, you can see an actual conversation where Jesus and Saul are talking to each other. Where is the conversation in Acts 7? You do not find Jesus conversing with Stephen. And **Delta** still has not answered the fact that Stephen not only saw Jesus, but he saw God as well. Yet he prays to Jesus, not God. **Delta** does not want to see this as a prayer, even though everyone recognizes the same words of our Savior on the cross was a prayer.

Delta spent a long paragraph about the word “mediator.” His whole argument is to prove that Moses is not Jesus. Doesn’t **Delta** know that no one is equal to Jesus. I never taught they were the same in every way. The things of the OT are a shadow of the things to come. That is a shadow of Jesus. That doesn’t mean they are exactly alike. In fact, **Delta** again misses the whole argument. **Delta** tells us that since Jesus is a mediator between God and man, we cannot speak to Jesus directly. Moses is an example to show that we can speak to our mediator.

Another passage that **Delta** abuses is 1 John 5:13,14. **Delta** cannot accept this passage talking about praying to Jesus, even though that is what it tells us, because of his misconception that we are to pray “Only” to the Father. There is no parenthetical statement in these verses as **Delta** has stated. And all of his arguments fit neatly into his misconception. But let me put it in print one more time so you can see the weight of my argument. John writes “...even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God. And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will...” The word “**And**” connects verse 13 to 14. And the word “**Him**” connects prayer to Jesus, not the Father.

Delta doesn’t seem to understand that the songs he sings are prayers, not just songs of praise. With the song “I am Thine O’ Lord,” the third verse says “When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend!”

Delta admits that he sings this song. So by default he admits that we can pray to Jesus. At the very least he admits that we can pray to Jesus in song. Then there is the song “Savior breath an Evening Blessing.” Read the words to this song. It is a prayer to Jesus. It even ends with the word “amen.” I half expected **Delta** to say that “Be With Me Lord” was talking to the Father as our Lord. But **Delta** did not even try to do this. Simply amazing! Oh consistency, thou art a jewel.

Sadly, **Delta** is the one that observed the Passover. He ignored many of my arguments as I have already pointed out. Maybe if I number them like **Delta** numbered the questions to me, he will give them the attention they deserve.

1. Is it alright to praise Jesus? (Is it scriptural to say to myself during the Lords’ supper, “I praise Jesus for being my Savior and for being willing to die in my place?”)

2. Is it alright to beseech Jesus? (If I am sick, and I went to Jesus “beseeching him” to help me, am I praying to Jesus by doing that?)

3. Is it alright to give thanks to Jesus. (Can I tell Jesus “Thank you for giving your life on the cross” during the Lord’s Supper?)

Delta has made it a point to distinguish between “beseeching” and “praying.” I am really anxious to see his answer to the second question.

I agree with **Delta** on the fact that we need to keep an open mind. **Delta**, I plead with you to step back from your view and give these arguments the weight they deserve. The reason I got into this debate was to show both sides to this issue. At the time, I could have argued either way. In fact, I once believed and taught as **Delta** does. I am not following after the men that I have quoted in this debate. I admire them even as I admire **Delta**. But now that I see how weak **Delta**’s arguments are next to the truth, I have come to the conclusion that the Bible does indeed teach we can pray to Jesus. One of the things **Delta** has taught me through the years is to think for myself. I just hope that **Delta** is willing to set aside his preconceived ideas, and comes to the same conclusion.

DELTA’S FOURTH NEGATIVE

Beta begins by saying that **Delta** has a “misunderstanding” about Jesus saying the disciples would ask Him “no questions” because the Spirit would give them the answer. My response is that whatever Jesus had in mind would apply to anything other than “questions” as well, for the Spirit might “give them the information” needed. Why not just go to the Spirit Himself, **Beta**, according to your logic? We are not talking about just “questions,” but anything in prayer.

Beta brings up his “ONLY” argument, and stated, “I did not chide him for putting ‘nothing’ in the text. I chided him for putting the words ‘only, directly, and absolutely’ in the text” (4th Aff., par. 2). Let’s get the record straight. In his 2nd Aff., par. 3, **Beta** stated, “first of all, Jesus does not say

in this passage, that we are to pray ‘ONLY’ to the Father.” I had never brought up the use of the word “only” prior to this statement by **Beta**. Then **Beta** rebuked me for saying that I added the words “only”, “directly” and “absolutely” to the text (3rd Aff., par. 4). I never used the words as part of any text, but used them in describing the teaching of Jesus under consideration. When Jesus specified something, He did not need to use such words, but they are implied, and that is what I was bringing out in my comments. Then, I went back to **Beta** and reminded him, that HE was the one who used “only” (saying Jesus did not say pray only to the Father, and that we could pray “also” to Him, the Son), and I compared his argument to that of denominationalists who want to argue Jesus did not say “only singing”, therefore we can add the instruments (2nd Neg. par. 1; 3rd Neg. par. 4). **Beta** is trying to create a diversionary tactic here. He seems to be desperate to score points by placing the use of “only” upon my shoulders. Surely, I did use the word “absolutely” and “directly,” but I did not make it a part of the text itself as **Beta** implies, but used them in the application of Jesus’ teaching.

Beta loves to dwell on Acts 1:24, 25, as an example of prayer “to Jesus.” We can observe here that Peter is quoting the “**Holy Ghost by the mouth of David**” (vs. 16), and then describes what “God” said, in that text about “**the Lord Jesus**” (vs. 21). Then, after Peter’s remarks, the disciples reacted, by “**praying**” (vs. 24). **Beta** thinks because Jesus is mentioned in the text that the “prayer” was to Jesus. Why not conclude that the prayer might be to the Holy Ghost, or to David? Why not to God the Father since what was said by the Holy Ghost through David was what the Father had said in the Psalms?

The passage in vs. 20 is from Psalms 69 and 109, where David was addressing GOD, or the LORD GOD. A good example of this is in Psalms 89 where David uses the word “**Lord**” nine times, the word “**God**” two times, and “**Lord God**” one time. He is the One who “**swore**” regarding the promises of the covenant, which was Jehovah God, and not the Son of God (cf. Psa. 89:35, 36; Heb. 6:17). Once David said, “**Thou art my father, my God**” (vs. 26). Now to Psalms 69, David uses the word “**God**” nine times, the word “**Lord**” three times, and “**Lord God**” one time. So, David is addressing God, the Lord, or the Lord God in this Psalm. The disciples in Acts 1 were prompted to pray because of what God had said in the Psalms. True, they were looking for a replacement for Judas (who had companied with them at “the time” Jesus was on earth), but they were acting upon what God had said. Then it was, that they “prayed” to the “Lord.” Why would they pray to Jesus, when Jesus Himself had said that “**in that day**” (when He would be gone) that they should pray “**to the Father**” in His (Jesus’) name (John 16:23-26). Anyhow, the very next time that a prayer is uttered, it was to God, the Father (Acts 4:24-30). They even addressed Him as “**Lord,**” but said He was God, and sepa-

rate from Christ, who was His “**holy child.**” Consistency would tell us that the first prayer was also to God the Father.

The second part of Peter’s quotation is from Psa. 109:8, which was also to “**God the Lord.**” So, there are two passages where God was speaking, and as they begin their speaking, it is only natural that it would be back to the One whose words were spoken.

Beta rebukes me for “defaming” the character of one of his “authorities” in an effort to prove that “me” should be in a passage that does not have it in standard translations of John 14:14, such as the *KJV*, *NKJV*, or *ASV*. I am not attacking the character of any of **Beta’s** authorities, but mentioned that one of them was very shaky on his belief that Jesus was not the only begotten Son of God. I mentioned the problem of **Beta** basing his belief of “praying to Jesus” being authorized by the vague possibility of “me” being genuine, merely because some ancient authorities thought it should be there, when all the scholars who translated the *KJV*, *ASV*, and *NKJV* rejected it. It clearly seems inconsistent with what Jesus plainly says elsewhere that we are not to pray to Him, and then turn right around and say “but when you do pray to me, I will answer”, and it is absurd to go to Jesus in prayer and say that we are going to Him “in the name of Jesus”. Surely, **Beta** knows the absurdity of the so-called “Sinner’s prayer,” which starts out “Lord Jesus,” and then closes “in the name of Jesus.” That would be like going to a representative of a business because he said we should go to the owner “in his name” (or because he, the representative authorized it, as a spokesman for the owner), and then, turn right around and ask the representative something, that he said we should speak to the owner about, for he is only the representative, and not the owner. Jesus even said that disciples should go to the Father, for He [the Son would not be speaking to the Father for them] (John 16:26). Any response, **Beta**?

Beta again dwelt on 1 John 5:13, 14. saying that I do not accept this as a prayer to Jesus. True, John talks about “**asking**” of the One who gives life, but he has already stated that it is “God” who gives that life (vss. 11, 16). Just because John talks about the Son of God in the text does not mean that our prayers are to Him.

Beta admits that Saul was not praying when he talked with Jesus in Acts 9, because Jesus said something (making it a conversation), but any other time when one says something to Jesus, and He doesn’t speak back, that it is automatically a prayer. He refers to occasions where revelation, visions and miracles involve words, that he (**Beta**) wants to call prayers. He once said that “Amen” at the end means certain words were prayers, but where is the “Amen” in those instances, and where is any reference to “the name of Jesus” in the words??

Now to **Beta’s** questions. He asks (1) Is it alright to praise Jesus? Then he gives himself as an example of praising Jesus in the Lord’s Supper. I would say it indeed is right

to praise Jesus, for we are commanded to “sing” praises to Him (Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15), or praise Him to other people, but I find no authority for addressing Him in prayer during the Lord’s Supper. I previously asked **Beta** what was the difference between prayer and praise, and he replied, “not all praise is prayer” (2nd Aff. Par. 10). I agree! **Beta** also asks (2) Is it alright to beseech Jesus? Paul did beseech Jesus in 2 Cor. 12, but it is not clearly a “prayer,” but a part of “**visions and revelation.**” Paul also did beseech a man (1 Tim. 1:2,3), but it wasn’t a prayer, was it? **Beta** also asks (3) Is it alright to give thanks to Jesus? Then, he gives himself as an example of talking to Him during the Lord’s Supper. In all three of his questions, he uses himself as an example of what he means, as if he is trying to justify himself. This reminds me of a denominational person who refers to his own experiences to try to prove he has been saved, and then asks “what’s wrong with that?” This appears to be an emotional type argument, which proves nothing.

This wraps up our affirmative and negative portions of the debate. There is not enough space to go back over all of the minor areas of discussion again, but the reader can carefully examine both arguments to determine if we have adequately covered the issues. Our next material will be a Summation from both of us.

S/Delta

BETA’S SUMMATION

Delta would have us to believe that John 16:23, 24 is the only word we have on who we direct our prayers to. He has stated that Jesus tells us “**in that day ye shall ask me no question.**” This is what he says, but you need to ask what is meant by this. I have pointed out that it means the disciples would not have a need to ask Jesus anything because the Holy Spirit will provide them with all of the information lacking. **Delta** believes it means they were not allowed to ask Jesus anything ever again! But that is not true. The apostles asked Jesus a question in Acts 1:6. If **Delta** is going to be consistent, he must say they were wrong in asking a question to Jesus because they violated John 16:23. When Saul had a conversation with Jesus in Acts 9, he sinned by asking Jesus questions.

Delta also wants us to believe Jesus is telling us to pray “only” to the Father. Make no mistake about it, I am not the one that put the word “only” in the arguments that are made. It is **Delta**. **Delta** went back to my 2nd and 3rd affirmative to try and prove this. He did not go back far enough. He should have gone back to the proposition he is trying to prove. It states: “The Bible teaches that prayer is to be offered ‘only’ to God the Father.” If **Delta** does not believe the word “only” belongs there, what is he debating?

There are basically two arguments that **Delta** has given concerning the passages that speak of prayer to Jesus. (1) He tells us that Lord means the Father. (2) Then he tells us that they are just having a conversation. He has proved neither. I have not given up on any of the passages I have used to show

they prayed to Jesus in the first century. We have centered on Acts 1 because **Delta** has stated several times that there are no examples of the disciples praying to Jesus. Yet this passage tells us plainly, “**they prayed... Lord.**” How does **Delta** handle this? The Lord is the Father. Why? Because this fits into his belief that we are to pray “only to the Father.” I am not the one who is using denominational tactics in this debate. It is **Delta**! He is like the denominational preacher who reads “Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved.” He ignores the immediate context. He interprets “Baptism saves you” with his preconceived idea about salvation by belief only, and says “no it doesn’t.” **Delta** looks at prayer to the Father as the only type of prayer we can make, and then interprets everything with that misconception.

I attended F-HU over 30 years ago, and **Delta** did the same over 50 years ago. About a month ago I listened to N. B. Hardeman preach for the first time. It was on the internet. I was surprised to hear brother Hardeman state he had never had an original thought. He stated that everything he is and everything he believes came from someone. Yes, there are several names that I have used during the course of this debate. I am not going to be guilty of plagiarizing these great men. But the things I believe on this I came to know over 25 years ago. It was long before Wayne Jackson taught this. Even the arguments that I have used have been different than brother Jackson. Who can believe that Guy N. Woods has been “brainwashed by the practices of denominationalism” as **Delta** has suggested? It shows you how far **Delta** has to go to try and make a point while teaching false doctrine. I do not now, nor have I ever taught the sinners prayer. The things I have taught have all had a “thus saith the Lord” behind them.

Delta asked for a response to his “representative, owner” argument. **Delta** still does not give any argument concerning the word “me” being in John 14:14 that addresses the issue. He believes it is “Absurd” for this word to be in the text. But he doesn’t address the “me” being connected to the “I” in this passage. Nor does he give any evidence that would suggest the newer translations are incorrect in using the word “me” in the text. There are some older manuscripts that were not available to the translators of the *KJV* and the *ASV*. If this were the *NIV* or *RSV* that I was citing as an authority, I could understand **Delta**’s questioning the addition. But I have quoted three different “Greek Language” authorities who state the word “me” belongs in the text. Now to his argument about the “representative, owner.” If **Delta** wants to know what is absurd, look at this argument. This would be tantamount to **Delta** comparing Jesus to an angel rather than the son of God! Jesus is more than a representative. He is a partner and an owner.

Delta accuses me of trying to justify myself by asking the questions I asked in the final affirmative. I asked the questions at the end of the third affirmative as well, but **Delta** did not answer them. He doesn’t like me putting the questions in the first person. Maybe he would like it better if

I placed the questions with his name on them. The fact is, not only did **Delta** not answer the questions in his third negative, he did not answer it in his final negative either. He did not tell us if we can beseech Jesus. If so, how would **Delta** do this? **Delta** is the one that made the big deal on the difference between prayer and beseech. This he did because he did not want to admit that Paul prayed to Jesus in 2 Cor. 12. Nor did **Delta** answer the question about whether or not we can thank Jesus. Is it possible for **Delta** to show his thankfulness to Jesus for dying on the cross for him? Again **Delta** tries to do away with the fact that Paul thanked Jesus by stating that he can be thankful for his wife. But there is a difference in saying I thank my wife, and I am thankful for my wife (1 Tim. 1:12).

I have no problem singing “I am thine O’ Lord” and “Savior Breath an Evening Blessing” because of this. **Delta** doesn’t want to admit that these songs are “prayers” to Jesus, but they are. **Delta** tells us he sings these songs. “When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend!” Those are the words to the third verse of “I am Thine, O Lord.” Who can read the words to the other song and not realize this is a prayer? To stay consistent with his teaching, he must teach it is sinful to sing songs such as these.

One of the questions that **Delta** asked was what would I teach on this topic. I thought I would close by answering that question. My answer is we are to pray to God the Father through Jesus. When we pray to the Father, we have an advocate, a mediator, and an intercessor in Jesus. What a privilege we have to be able to pray to the Father!

Jesus is our Savior and brother. He is the head of the church. **“For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.”** What a privilege we have to be able to pray to our Savior!

I have enjoyed being able to have this discussion with **Delta**. I trust that anyone that takes the time to read this debate will look at the issues involved. Weigh both sides of the arguments and follow the truth.

DELTA’S FINAL SUMMATION

Before my very final words, I sum up some points not yet clear to **Beta**. He says that I, **Delta**, am the one who used “only” in my arguments. Now, I indeed did use the word in my proposition, because it coincided with the very heart of the argument Jesus made, that we are to pray to the Father, in the name of Jesus. I chided **Beta** for using it as denominationalists use it, when they say, “Jesus didn’t say sing only, so we can add instruments”—implying that as long as Jesus doesn’t specifically “say” not to do something, we can do it. They fail to observe the importance of specific teachings, and the exclusiveness of these teachings.

Beta says I did not answer his three questions. Readers can go back to my 4th negative, paragraph 9, and see that I

did answer every question. **Beta** thinks I ignored his comments on singing “I am Thine, O Lord,” which he contends is a “prayer” hymn. He seems to assume that anytime “Lord” is mentioned in a song, it refers to Jesus. This is not true in scripture, or in our songs. If **Beta** will take time to examine this particular song, he will see that the song never makes any reference to Jesus, and the 3rd stanza reads, “When I kneel in prayer, and with thee, my God...”. So, the song is to God. We must also remember that we can praise Jesus in “songs,” for we are commanded to do this in Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 (if the word here is suggestive of that, even though the next verse after both passages speaks of God the Father “and” the Lord Jesus Christ). I prefer not to sing songs directed to Jesus that actually suggest that we are “praying” to Him, but see nothing sinful about singing songs that directly praise Him.

Beta says my arguments are basically two: (1) That the “Lord” means the Father, and (2) What he (**Beta**) says are “prayers,” that I (**Delta**) call them conversations.” Lord” sometimes does refer to God in the *KJV*, unless Jesus is specified, or where the Father is further identified, as in Acts 4. I believe it does in Acts 1 as well, as the scriptures quoted are addressed to God the Father of Jesus Christ (Psa. 69, and 109). Many of the instances of wording by one to the Lord, or in conversation are indeed communication or conversation between two parties. Even **Beta** admitted this in the matter of Acts 9, between Saul and Jesus (4th Aff. Par. 7).

Beta still contends that “me” should be in the text of John 14:14, and that I, **Delta**, reject the “newer translations” that include it. What newer translations? **Beta** only listed the margin of the *ASV*, and mentioned some “authorities” who thought it was justified, but gave no translations by name.

I want to include the following chart in my summation, which sums up what I have previously written on the subject of Jesus authorizing prayer to the Father, in the name of Jesus.

“hitherto” John 16:24 (up to this point in time)	“in that day” John 16:23,26 (when He would go to the Father)
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ASCENSION

“asked nothing in my name” John 16:24	“ask the Father” vs. 23
	“ask in my name” vs. 26
	He (Jesus) would “not pray the Father” for them. vs. 26

Several passages emphasize that prayer is to the Father, as we now observe.

“We give thanks to God and the Father....praying always” (Col. 1:13). “In everything, by prayer....let your requests be made known unto God” (Phi. 4:6). “I thank my God....in every prayer of mine” (Phi. 1:3, 4). God is identified in verse 2 as “God the Father.” “We give thanks to God always....in our prayers” (1 The. 1:2). “What thanks can we render to God...praying always...” (1 The. 3:9).

“We....thank God always” (2 The. 1:3). God is identified in verse 2 as **“God our Father.”**

Several times Paul said we should give thanks and pray to the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, but never said that we are to pray to Jesus in the name of Jesus or in the name of the Father.

I like the words of **Beta’s** Summation, par. 8, when he wrote the following:

One of the questions that Delta asked was what would I teach on this topic. I thought I would close by answering that ques-

tion. My answer is we are to pray to God the Father through Jesus. When we pray to the Father, we have an advocate, a mediator, and an intercessor in Jesus. What a privilege we have to be able to pray to the Father.

Beta is my longtime friend and brother in the Lord, and though we differ, neither of us want to disfellowship each other over our divergent views, nor do we wish this issue to become divisive in the church. Let’s be on the safe side, and let truth prevail.

S/ **Delta**



(Continued from Page 2)

effort to prove his case as well as refute the position of his opponent. Though not exhaustive, the following fundamental questions should be asked by the reader concerning each participant’s efforts in this debate, or any debate of this nature, whether oral or written.

1. Did each disputant define the terms of his proposition?
2. Did each party understand the implication(s) of his proposition?
3. Was the Bible used as the only standard of measurement in attempting to prove and disprove matters (2 Tim. 3:16,17)?
4. Was there a clear respect for and a thorough understanding of the importance of the immediate and remote context of the Scriptures employed in the debate?
5. Did each person indicate that he knew the difference between generic and specific terms?
6. Did each disputant understand that a modern dictionary only gives the present usage of words?
7. Did each participant evidence a clear understanding of the truth that before one is obligated before God to do anything, the Word of God must authorize it (Col. 3:17)?
8. Did each disputant demonstrate that he knew that the Bible authorizes anyone to do anything only by *direct statements, example, and implication*?
9. Did each debater indicate he fully understood that an example of something does not have to be found in the Bible before it is authorized?
10. Did each debater disclose that he knew that in the process of authorizing certain matters, the Bible allows for options in getting done the thing(s) authorized?
11. Did each person understand that in discharging the obligation wherein options are available, one chooses the option that discharges the obligation in the most advantageous (expedient) manner?
12. Did each disputant indicate that he understood the difference between obligatory and optional matters?
13. Did either one of the debaters attempt to make optional

matters obligatory or obligatory matters optional?

14. Did each brother evidence proper respect, understanding, and use of the laws of valid inference in efforts to argue his case from the scriptures?
15. Is there evidence that each person understood the difference in merely asserting something to be true and proving it to be true?
16. Did the disputant show that he understood that truth cannot imply error?
17. Did each party reveal that he realized that students of the Bible are to infer only what the Bible implies?
18. Did each debater understand that when all of the parts of a thing are proven to be true, the whole of the thing is true?
19. Did either party ridicule logic?
20. Did the participants reveal that they understood that precisely stated propositions are without exception true or false?
21. Did the disputants know how to make an argument?
22. Did the parties understand that when the major and minor premises of a syllogism are true and the syllogism is valid, the conclusion cannot be wrong?
23. Did the disputants understand that an illustration proves nothing; that it only illustrates?
24. Did either brother attempt to deny the implication(s) of his proposition?
25. Did the debaters treat one another with respect?
26. Was the issue clearly stated?
27. Did each person present his material in a systematic manner?
28. Was there any attempt to “beg the question”?
29. Did either participant personally attack his opponent?
30. Did either brother demonstrate that he would not change his position regardless of how adequate the evidence was or how logically it was presented?

31. In college, one of the courses most beneficial to me was “Listening Comprehension.” We were taught that a person could say he had “listened” only when he had understood the information. While there are many things necessary to listening, if one cannot logically analyze information it is impossible for him to comprehend it; and, if one has not comprehended what was said or written, he has not listened. Hence, knowing how to properly “think through” material is directly connected with drawing a correct conclusion. The aforelisted questions emphasize principles necessary to analyze material whether spoken or written. Thus, when one has finished reading and studying each participant’s material, he may correctly answer the question, “What did the debater actually say?”

32. Another very important point necessary to correctly evaluating a debate is to examine closely whether each disputant has truthfully represented what his opponent has said. In

other words, did each debater say what his opponent said he said? For obvious reasons this is more easily done in a written debate; however, it is imperative that time and effort be used in reading and re-reading material if such is to be adequately done.

In closing these comments, it is most appropriate to emphasize the words of Jesus when He instructs us to “**Take heed what ye hear**” and “**how ye hear...**” (Mark 4:24; Luke 8:18). We must be sure that “**what**” we hear is truly Bible instruction. “**How**” one hears pertains to one’s proper application of God’s truth to his life (Luke 8:15; Mat. 5:6; John 7:17). Hence, it seems most appropriate to urge the reader of this debate to heed the words of Jesus when He said, “**Who hath ears to hear, let him hear**” (Mat. 13:9).

—David P. Brown, Editor



DISUNITY IN THE BROTHERHOOD

Brock Hartwigen

There are some in the brotherhood who make it sound as if any disunity between individual brethren or congregations is sinful. While it is true that there is a lot of sinful disunity, complete unity is not possible and not all disunity is sinful. These brethren often cite John 17:21 where Jesus prayed for the unity of believers. They argue that since Jesus prayed for it, it is possible and mandated. They ask, “Would Jesus pray for something that wasn’t possible?” The answer is, “Yes, He would and He did. This is not the only time He prayed for the impossible.”

Impossible?

Jesus knew and understood that most people in the world were not and would not live lives of obedience to God (Mat. 7:13-14). He understood that, as a result of this, God’s will would not be done “**in earth as it is in Heaven.**” Yet, He prayed and taught the apostles to pray, “**Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven**” (Mat. 6:10). God informed us, in 1 John 1:8, that even Christians will occasionally fail to do God’s will. Jesus was knowingly praying for something that was not possible. But, more than that, He was also teaching His disciples to pray for something that was not possible. Jesus was teaching His disciples to desire and pray for perfection, even if that perfection was unattainable.

In Gethsemane Jesus understood that He had to suffer the agony of Calvary. Yet, He prayed and asked God to spare Him if possible. He was knowingly praying for something that was not possible. Jesus was expressing His true heart-filled desire to God.

On the cross Jesus prayed and asked God to “**forgive them, for they know not what they do**” (Luke 23:34). However, God’s ability, or I should say, God’s willingness to forgive them was based on their willingness to be repentful and obedient to God (Acts 2:38). Jesus was knowingly praying for something that was not possible. Jesus was expressing His true heart-filled desire to God. Likewise, Jesus in His prayer in the upper room with His apostles when He prayed for the unity of all believers was, in fact, praying for something that was not possible and He knew it. He was expressing His true heart-filled desire to God.

“Wait a minute,” some might object, “unity has to be possible or it would not be required as it is in 1 Cor. 1:10.” Would Jesus require something that wasn’t possible?” Again the answer is not only yes, but once again, this is not the only place He did it.

In Matthew’s account of Jesus’ great commission, we find Jesus

commanding the apostles to teach the new converts to be obedient to Him in all things (Mat. 28:20). But, Jesus must have known that that total obedience would be impossible (1 John 1:8). Surely Jesus knew that those of us who became disciples would need His blood to continuously cleanse us from our sins (1 John 1:7).

Jesus’ requirement of perfection (Mat. 28:20) is not possible. It is the ideal that all His followers should strive for, and we should never settle for anything else. Jesus’ requirement for unity (John 17:21) isn’t possible. It is the ideal that all His followers should strive for, and we should never settle for anything else. We should never abandon that ideal, but we need to accept the reality that it is an unreachable star.

Disunity Is Commanded By God

Not only is disunity going to be the reality, but God actually mandates disunity in the church. When a brother chooses to transgress (“**goeth onward**” *ASV*) and not to abide “**in the doctrine of Christ,**” then faithful Christians are told to “**receive him not into**” their homes nor to “**bid him God speed.**” If we do, we become a “**partaker of his evil deeds**” (2 John 9-11). Church discipline is God-mandated disunity. The disunity is not caused by the faithful, but by the unfaithful who abandoned “**the doctrine of Christ.**”

Why does God command disunity (church discipline, i.e., disfellowshipping) when it is exactly the opposite of what Jesus prayed for? There are three reasons. 1) To save the sinner (1 Cor. 5:5; 2 The. 3:14; 1 Tim. 1:20). 2) To save the church (Acts 5:1-11; 1 Tim. 5:20; 1 Cor. 5:6-7; Gal. 6:1; Rev. 2:20). 3) To save the souls of the lost world (Mat. 5:13-16; Acts 5:11; 1 Pet. 2:9-12). The teachings about disfellowshipping generally apply to individuals, but sometimes they will also need to be applied to whole congregations. Congregations as well as individual Christians can sin. The Corinthian congregation was ripped apart with division and contentions as to who was more important based on who baptized them (1 Cor. 1) and on whose miraculous gift was more important (1 Cor. 12-14). They had little or no respect and love for each other when it came to sharing and partaking of the Lord’s Supper (1 Cor. 11). They also were accepting into fellowship a man engaged in a sin that even the pagan world would condemn (1 Cor. 5).

In the seven letters to the seven churches of Asia, we find some hor-

rible examples of congregations sinning. The Ephesian congregation had **“left their first love”** (Rev. 2:1-7). The congregation in Pergamos had false teachers in their midst and were doing nothing about it (Rev. 2:12, 14-15). Thyatira had a false prophetess in their midst (Rev. 2:18, 20). Jesus said that the church in Sardis was dead (Rev. 3:1). Jesus said that the church in Laodicea was **“lukewarm”** and that He could just spit them out of His mouth because of it (Rev. 3:14-16).

If these congregations refused to repent, then Jesus would have withdrawn His fellowship from them (Rev. 2:5). As brother James Pilgrim Jr. wrote:

Fellowship with God is based upon our keeping the words of Jesus (John 14:23; 1 John 3:24; 1:6). Communion with Jesus requires doing God’s will (Mat. 12:50), walking as He walked (1 John 2:6, 24; 3:24), abiding in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9). When individuals or churches sin and refuse to

repent, both the Father and Son withdraw fellowship from them (Rev. 2 and 3). If Deity will not have fellowship with unrepentant churches, what right have we, whether individually or collectively as a congregation, to bid God speed to that church?

Conclusion

Absolute unity among individual believers and sister congregations of the Lord’s church is the ideal that we should all pray for and strive for. But, as long as there are brethren and congregations that do not respect God’s will and go about establishing their own form of righteousness (Rom. 10:1), there will be a God-mandated need for disunity.

—189 Brookside Dr.
Stanton, KY 40380



“I AM THE TRUE VINE”

G. K. Wallace

Isaiah used the vine as a type of Israel, planted and tended by the Almighty as the husbandman (Isa. 5:1). Israel was not the true vine. Christ is the true vine (John 15:1). In John 14 the Lord had just said to the disciples, “Arise, let us go hence.” He had just eaten the last supper with the apostles. He said that he would not drink of the fruit of the vine again on this earth. Likely on the table from which they had just risen was the fruit of the vine. And now he says, “I am the true vine.”

In the first eight verses of John 15 we find the following outstanding lessons about the vine and the branches.

1. That morality alone cannot save.
2. That there is but one true church.
3. That we should get in Christ, stay in Christ, and stay out of everything else or be lost.

Jesus said, **“Apart from me you can do nothing.”** Morality alone cannot save. Men can be morally good apart from Christ. Yet apart from Christ they can do nothing. There is no spiritual life apart from Christ. Cornelius was a moral man apart from Christ but he was unsaved. (Acts 11:14). If morality alone can save then Jesus died in vain. There were just as good men morally to be found in the Mosaic age as there are now. If a man can be saved by his own goodness then Jesus died for no purpose at all. Why did he die if they could be saved by their own goodness? Let the moral man remember these words, **“Apart from me you can do nothing.”** There is no spiritual life apart from Jesus Christ, the true vine.

Thus we see that one must get into Christ to be saved. Paul says that we are baptized into Christ. That makes baptism necessary to salvation in Christ Jesus. You cannot do anything apart from Christ but you can’t get into Christ unless you are baptized (Gal. 3:27).

This **“true vine”** is the true church. The vine is the spiritual body of Christ. The church is His body (Col. 1:18). There is one body. (Eph. 4:4.) There is but one body (1 Cor. 12:20). Paul does not say “churches” but **“the church.”** If one desires to be united with Christ let him obey the gospel and thus be added to the **“one body,”** the church, the “true vine.”

The objector says that Christ is the true vine and all the denominations are branches. Christ said, **“I”** am the vine and **“ye”** are the branches. “He” that abideth in me. Note the use of the personal pronoun. Do men refer to churches as “he” and “ye? Is that the way they talk where you live? Is that the way your preacher talks? Would you say about the Baptist Church—he is a large church? The use of the personal pronoun

shows that Christ was talking to his disciples and not to “churches.” Individuals are the branches and not organizations. But just suppose for a minute that the branches are churches. In what branch are you? You say that I am in the Baptist branch. Yes, but wait, Christ said abide in “me.” You should not abide in a branch but in the vine. If you are in a branch you ought to get out of it and get in the vine. Get out of the branch and get in the vine. **“If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”** Abide in the vine or be burned. Do not abide in a branch. You cannot abide in a branch. A branch is a disciple or a Christian. Individuals are the branches and not denominations.

Did God set denominations in the vine? If so, which ones did He put in? If God set denominations in the vine it is strange that He never said anything about it. If He did mention them will someone please tell where?

For one to claim that denominations are the branches is an apology for something they know that is not mentioned in the Bible and a rank perversion of the fifteenth chapter of John. Denominations came into existence hundreds of years after Christ. They are of human origin and no one has a Bible right to belong to any of them.

The **“true vine,”** the church, was established by Christ and all Christians are members of it (John 3:5). The church is God’s house. God’s house is His family (1 Tim. 3:15). God has no children outside of His family.

From this chapter we learn that we must bear fruit to please God. **“Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples.”** You cannot bear fruit apart from the vine. To bear fruit you must be in the vine. How does one get in the vine? He must believe (Mark 16:15-16.) He must repent (Acts 2:38). He must be baptized (Gal. 3:27). These steps put one into Christ. Yet it is not enough to get into Christ. In Christ the branch must bear good fruit. The fruitless branch (disciple) will be lost. He will be cast forth and be burned. (John 15:6.) Our duty in regard to this is clear. We must get in Christ, stay in Christ, and stay out of everything else.

Someone may ask, “Can a man be saved and go to heaven and stay out of the vine?” No, for Christ says, **“Apart from me you can do nothing.”** It is Christ or nothing. It is the true vine or no vine. It is the true church or no church. Christ here teaches that you cannot be saved out of the church and you cannot be saved unless you stay in the church.

—Deceased
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Cambridgeshire—Cambridge City Church of Christ, meeting at The Manor Community College, Arbury Rd., Cambridge, CB4 2JF. Sun., Bible Study--10:30 a.m., Worship-- 11:30 a.m.; Tue. Bible Study--7:30 p.m. www.CambridgeCityCoC.org.uk. Keith Sisman, Gospel Preacher. Contacts: Keith Sisman [By phone inside USA (281) 475-8247; Inside the U.K.: Cambridge (England): 01223-911243]; Alternative Cambridge contacts: Joan Moulton - 01223-210101; Postal/mailling Address - PO BOX 1, Ramsey Huntingdon, PE26 2YZ United Kingdom

-Florida-

Ocoee—Ocoee Church of Christ, 2 East Magnolia Street, Ocoee, FL 34761. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 6:00 p.m. Wed. 7:00 p.m. David Hartbarger, Evangelist, (407) 656-2516.

Pensacola—Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526, Sun. 9:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m. Michael Hatcher, evangelist, (850) 455-7595.

-Montana-

Helena—Mountain View Church of Christ, 1400 Joslyn Street, Helena, Mt. 59601, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Daniel Coe, evangelist (406) 475-4686 or Matt Bidmead (406) 461-9199.

-Oklahoma-

Porum—Church of Christ, 8 miles South of I-40 at Hwy 2, Warner exit. Sun. 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. Allen Lawson, evangelist, e-mail: allenlawson@earth-comm.com.

-South Carolina-

Belvedere (Greater Augusta, Georgia Area)—Church of Christ, 535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841, www.belvederechurchofchrist.org; e-mail belvecoc@gmail.com, (8-3) 442-6388, Sun.: 10:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., 6:00p.m., Wed. 7:00 p.m., Evangelist: Ken Chumbley (803)279-8663

Texas-

Denton area—Northpoint Church of Christ, 4224 N. I-35 (Greenway Plaza, just north of Cracker Barrel). Mailing address: 4224 N. I-35, Denton, TX 76207. E-mail: northpointcoc@hotmail.com. Website: www.northpointcoc.com. Sunday: 9:30, 10:30, 1:00; Wednesday 7:00. Contact: Dub McClish: (940) 387-1429; dubmcclish@gmail.com.

Evant—Evant Church of Christ, 310 West Brooks Drive, Evant, TX 76525. Office: (254) 471-5705; Jess Whitlock, evangelist (254) 471-5717.

Houston area—Spring Church of Christ, 1327 Spring Cypress, P.O. Box 39, Spring, TX 77383, (281) 353-2707. Sun. 9:30 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m., Wed. 7:30 p.m., David P. Brown, evangelist. Home of the Spring *Contending for the Faith* Lectures, and the internet school, Truth Bible Institute. www.churchesofchrist.com.

Huntsville—1380 Fish Hatchery Rd. Huntsville, TX 77320. Sun. 9 a. m., 10 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (936) 438-8202.

Richwood—1600 Brazosport, Richwood, TX. Sun. 9:30; 10:30 a.m., 6 p.m., Wed. 7 p.m. (979) 265-4256.