

The Lord's Prayer  
Establishing the Realm on Earth as it exists in The Universe  
REALM: **Replicate Equality As Life Model**

Introduction:

The world today is dramatically different than the way it was perceived in the early centuries of the Common Era (CE). Today we have the knowledge and understanding of a universe that is factually based on observation, hypothesis and theory, and is completely different from the concepts that existed in the first century. While the "Lord's Prayer" is still known and memorized by many people, how well, when repeated today, does it correlate with our more comprehensive understanding and meaning of life now? How much differently do we translate those words and phrases when we repeat them today?

Our history of thought is a living part of what we think and who we are now. However, over many thousands of years our lives have become dramatically different in thought, word and deed and continue changing, even faster, each successive year.

"Although the concept of biology as a single coherent field arose in the 19th century, the biological sciences emerged from traditions of medicine and natural history reaching back to Ayurveda, ancient Egyptian medicine and the works of Aristotle and Galen in the ancient Greco-Roman world. ... Over the 18th and 19th centuries, biological sciences such as botany and zoology became increasingly professional scientific disciplines. Lavoisier and other physical scientists began to connect the animate and inanimate worlds through physics and chemistry."

[\[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_biology\]](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_biology)

Many religious people, especially Christians, are not fully aware of how much of their beliefs, dogma, and creeds still try to maintain the language and sense of the earth-centric world from earlier times. All of the scriptures that were created during the earth-centric understanding, including the Bible and Koran, use and contain words that are completely foreign to our understanding of the universe as we now know, understand and experience it today.

"We Christians think our views about things come from the Bible, or from God, or even from our own Christian ancestors, but this is not always so. Our view of human nature, for example, has been more influenced by the Greek philosopher Plato than by Jesus. About four hundred years before Jesus, Plato laid out a framework for thinking about reality that sits at the foundation of the way Western Christians think and feel about their nature. ... Plato contended, the world we know—the world of objects, people, time, and place—is the shadow world. It is not reality. The real world, he taught us, exists somewhere else, somewhere outside this shadow land of our current experience. ... When an idea, an experience, or an object leaves its pure, abstract, non-physical existence in that other realm, and when it gets shoehorned into the physical world we live in, it is reduced, tainted, and made somehow lesser. And this Greek view of reality, it turns out, has had a lot to do with the way Western Christians think about our own human nature."

(from: Chap. 7 - Leftovers from Gnostic Dualism - in

*Rethinking Our Story, Can We Be Christian in the Quantum Era?* - by Douglas Hammack)

We need not lose sight of the thousands of years of previous thought that developed before the Common Era. It is also important to include many centuries of philosophical and religious thought that continued throughout

the Common Era and contributed to valuable developments that led to The Enlightenment by the 17th and 18th centuries. It was through the flourishing growth in scientific fields that our humanity progressed by leaps and bounds into the world in which we live now. The Ayurveda (traditional system of medicine in India), ancient Egyptian medicine, the works of Aristotle and Galen in the Greco-Roman climate, were the developing seeds for modern medicine we practice today. As was pointed out previously, “Christians think our views about things come from the Bible, or from God, or even from our own Christian ancestors, but this is not always so.” The Bible itself is a collection of writings, called books, that were chosen and made official by the establishment of the Holy Roman Catholic Church in the 5th century.

“The Christian biblical canons are the books Christians regard as divinely inspired and which constitute a Christian Bible. Which books constituted the Christian biblical canons of both the Old and New Testament was generally established, despite some scholarly disagreements, for the ancient undivided Church (the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions, before the East–West Schism).”

[[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development\\_of\\_the\\_Christian\\_biblical\\_canon](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Development_of_the_Christian_biblical_canon)]

It is important to realize that Jesus lived in Galilee at the beginning of the 1st century and that he was crucified by Roman authorities, possibly 30 years later on Friday April 3, 33 CE. Then came Paul, whom we must remember, never met the living Jesus in person. It was only through writings and stories that he included Jesus as the Christ in his letters beginning in the 50's CE. Because the Gospels were not yet written, it stands to reason that Paul simply hadn't heard all of the many details offered from those Gospels later on. It was only after the most famous eyewitnesses to Jesus died (Peter, Paul, James), that the Gospels began to be written down. The Gospels were more probably written after 66 CE when the Jewish population rebelled against the Roman Empire and, four years later in 70 CE, when Roman legions under Titus retook and destroyed much of Jerusalem including the Second Temple. Although some scholars disagree, the vast majority of researchers believe that Mark was the first Gospel to be written, sometime around the year 70 CE. This scholarly consensus holds that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were composed independently of one another utilizing Mark as their base, sometime in the 80's or 90's. The Gospel of John is usually dated last, sometime from 90–110 CE.

### **The Prayer attributed to Jesus in the Bible:**

There are two versions of the Lord's Prayer in the Bible, one in Matthew and the other in Luke. I have chosen the GOD'S WORD Translation (GW) to give us a newer and more modern expression in today's English. Neither of these are exactly like the traditional Lord's Prayer that many pray today, but the main ideas are familiar. The response, according to these Gospels, that Jesus gave when his followers, who saw him often in prayer, asked him to teach them to pray.

#### Matthew 6:9-13

“This is how you should pray:  
Our Father in heaven,  
let your name be kept holy.  
Let your kingdom come.  
Let your will be done on earth  
as it is done in heaven.  
Give us our daily bread today.  
Forgive us as we forgive others.  
Don't allow us to be tempted.  
Instead, rescue us from evil.

Luke 11:2-4  
“When you pray, say this:  
Father,  
let your name be kept holy.  
Let your kingdom come.  
Give us our bread day by day.  
Forgive us as we forgive everyone else.  
Don't allow us to be tempted.”

There seem to be five main ideas that come from each of the prayers for us to examine:

1. "Let your name be kept holy"

Holy is defined in today's dictionaries as, "exalted or worthy of complete devotion as one perfect in goodness and righteousness." When God called to Moses, in the story of the burning bush, he was told to remove his sandals because he was standing on holy ground. Exalted, worthy, perfect goodness and righteousness would have been commonly understood by most in their understanding of God.

According to scripture, the name God given to Moses, when he asked whom he should say sent him to his people, was simply YHWH, "I Am Who I Am." Exodus 3:11-15, GOD'S WORD Translation (GW)

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the people of Israel out of Egypt?" God answered, "I will be with you. And this will be the proof that I sent you: When you bring the people out of Egypt, all of you will worship God on this mountain." Then Moses replied to God, "Suppose I go to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' What should I tell them?" God answered Moses, "**I Am Who I Am.**" This is what you must say to the people of Israel: '**I Am** has sent me to you.'"

Again God said to Moses, "This is what you must say to the people of Israel: The Lord God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has sent me to you. This is my name forever. This is my title throughout every generation.

"Many scholars believe that the most proper meaning may be "He Brings into Existence Whatever Exists" (Yahweh-Asher-Yahweh). [<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Yahweh>]

People like Abraham, Moses, other leaders, and in fact, all people of God are called to imitate the actions of God in bringing an end to injustice into our world communities today as was done in the exodus in Egypt.

2. "Let your **kingdom** come" - "Let your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

Here Jesus is alluding to God's Kingdom (which was God's Covenant that was an agreement for a way of life in company with God and not a "rule" as often interpreted). It was simply the way God would expect us to live together. "Let your Covenant come among us. Let your will be done on earth as it is done in all creation."

Kingdom, "a politically organized community or major territorial unit having a monarchical form of government headed by a king or queen." These were a common form of government before the Common Era. By the time we moved into the 1st century things were changing. In Greece, just prior to the Common Era, is where democracy was being formed.

"The word democracy derives from the Greek *dēmos* which referred to the entire citizen body and although it is Athens which has become associated with the birth of democracy (*demokratia*) from

around 460 BCE, other Greek states did establish a similar political system, notably, Argos, (briefly) Syracuse, Rhodes, and Erythrai. Athens is, however, the state we know most about. The assembly of Athens met at least once a month, perhaps two or three times, on the Pnyx hill in a dedicated space which could accommodate 6000 citizens. Any male citizen 18 years or over could speak (at least in theory) and vote in the assembly, usually with a simple show of hands. Attendance was even paid for in certain periods which was a measure to encourage citizens who lived far away and couldn't afford the time-off to attend. Citizens probably accounted for 10-20% of the polis population, and of these it has been estimated that only 3,000 or so people actively participated in politics. Of this group, perhaps as few as 100 citizens - the wealthiest, most influential, and the best speakers - dominated the political arena both in front of the assembly and behind the scenes in private conspiratorial political meetings (*xynomusiai*) and groups (*hetaireiai*)." [\[https://www.ancient.eu/Greek\\_Government/\]](https://www.ancient.eu/Greek_Government/)

### Roman government - Republic to Empire:

In the first century BCE, Rome was a republic. Power lay in the hands of the Senate, elected by Roman citizens. But the senators were fighting for power between themselves. Order had given way to anarchy and only might was right.

By 50 BCE, Caesar had made many powerful enemies with his life under threat, he invaded Italy. Over the next few years, he defeated his enemies and seized power for himself. ... But his rule would be brief. ... Rome was again threatened with chaos.

The Battle of Actium was a huge victory. ... In Rome, Augustus was a hero. In 31 BCE, he became Rome's first emperor. The transformation from republic to empire was complete.

[\[http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/republic.html\]](http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/republic.html)

By the beginning of the Common Era the basic rule in the whole area became an Empire and Judaism was an integral part of that empire. The idea of Covenant was no longer paramount in their vision.

"Judaism" in the time of Jesus is more properly designated "Judaisms" as it can include a rich variety of forms and practices that flourished during late Second Temple times (200 BCE-70 CE). In one way or the other this diverse "Jewish" culture traces itself back to the Hebrew Bible and the history of the ancient Israelites. By Roman times, with the northern Ten Tribes long ago carried away into Assyrian captivity and largely lost to history, it became customary to refer to all those of Hebrew or Israelite ancestry who lived in the Roman Mediterranean world as "Jews," and to their religious-cultural life as "Judaism." [\[https://clas-pages.uncc.edu/james-tabor/the-jewish-world-of-jesus-an-overview/\]](https://clas-pages.uncc.edu/james-tabor/the-jewish-world-of-jesus-an-overview/)

### 3. "Give us bread day by day"

Sharing bread and wine was basic to meals in these times as it was for many years prior and still continues today. These and other basic daily needs are part of our human need and consciousness.

### 4. "Forgive us as we forgive others"

Learning how to be civil and acquiring the ability get along is clearly an essential for living in peace and harmony regardless of the rule of the times.

#### 5. "Keep us from temptation"

The dangers and turmoil around us day by day are not the only problems for living well. It is often too easy for all of us to create our own problems that bring us trouble and calamity via temptation.

#### The Doxology:

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen" (Mt. 6:13).

1 - Alternative reading in footnote n of RSVCE. (Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition)

Most Catholics in the West know this doxology from the Mass and also from the devotional prayer of Protestants. When most Protestants pray the Lord's Prayer, they include the doxology. The doxology is missing from the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament. We find it, however, appended to the Our Father in almost all the ancient liturgies, dating back to the time of the apostles. It appears, for example, in the *Didache (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles)*, a manual of instruction which many scholars believe was written in Antioch in 60-90 A.D.

It is significant that the doxology, though absent from Scripture, is always found in the Mass of the ancient Church. For the Mass sums up the reasons for the hope of Christians, then and now.

Why do we pray with confidence? Because we know God is almighty.

We can pray that His name will be holy because we know that His name is holy from all eternity.

We can pray for the coming of His Kingdom because we know that His Kingdom is already here.

We can pray with assurance that His will be done because we know His will is inexorable, in spite of our free choices against Him.

[<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/the-kingdom-the-power-and-the-glory.html>]

#### **Revolutionary Changes in the 1st Century:**

##### The Life and Ministry of Jesus:

In the very beginning, Jesus at about 30 years of age, began his ministry introduced by the prophet John the Baptist. Jesus was well aware of the struggles of many Jews and others who were poor with little personal control in their lives. Those who were in control had ways of seizing their wealth with a complete lack of concern for those who had little. The Temple in Jerusalem was also under the control of Rome with a tax structure that managed the Temple. There was no longer an awareness of "The Covenant" that God had initiated for all people to have full inclusion in every part of their community, instituted by Moses and taught by the Prophets. From the beginning of his ministry Jesus was announcing that Kingdom of God and the changes that were necessary to bring that Realm of God to this new Era in his time.

##### The beginnings of revolt and destruction of the Temple:

Gessius Florus loved money and hated Jews. As Roman procurator, he ruled Judea, caring little for their religious sensibilities. When tax revenues were low, he seized silver from the temple. As the uproar against him grew, in A.D. 66, he sent troops into Jerusalem who massacred 3,600 citizens.

Florus's action touched off an explosive rebellion—the First Jewish Revolt—that had been sizzling for some time. (Read more in the following links)

[<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-28/ad-70-titus-destroys-jerusalem.html>]

<http://www.templemount.org/destruct2.html>

### The Beginning of the Gospels:

As we noted at the end of the introduction:

*The vast majority of researchers believe that Mark was the first Gospel to be written, sometime around the year 70. This scholarly consensus holds that the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke were composed, independently of one another, sometime in the 80s or 90s. The Gospel of John is usually dated to AD 90–110.*

The books, as they appear in the Bible, are not always in the order in which they were written. The New Testament begins with the Gospel of Matthew and then continues with Mark, Luke and John. In the Bible we are aware of Paul's letters, probably written from 50 CE, but it was not until recently, in 1945, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in the Qumran Caves:

(Qumran Caves are a series of caves, some natural, some artificial, found around the archaeological site of Qumran in the Judean Desert of the West Bank. It is in a number of these caves that the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered.) [[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qumran\\_Caves](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qumran_Caves)]

Other copies of writing in the 1st century were also hidden because of the turmoil and chaos, before and after the destruction of the Temple, and the war surrounding all those changes.

Fear and anguish that abounded around these cataclysmic times probably fostered the writing of the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It was also during this time that the Jewish and Gentile followers of Jesus began to split apart. The Jewish community was scattered from Jerusalem while the Gentile followers were mainly disbursed throughout the Greek and Roman communities. Luke, who also authored the Book of Acts, detailed much of the missionary ministry of Paul.

### Mark:

“Probably the oldest of the Gospels, Mark is a collection of traditions about Jesus brought together around 70 CE. ... The author depicts Jesus' early ministry as centered in Galilee, where he proclaims the imminence of the rule and salvation of God (the kingdom) and performs wonders; at its climax comes Peter's confession of faith and the first announcement of the passion (8:27-33). ... The book's purpose is succinctly expressed: to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (1:1; 15:39).” (Intro to Mark's Gospel in the Oxford Study Bible, page 1404)

Both Matthew and Luke use large portions of Mark for their core material. For materials not found in Mark: a Sayings “source” which is usually given the designation “Q” (for German Quelle, “source”). ... “each evangelist (as the Gospel authors are called) is seen to have utilized unique traditions as well.” (Page 1265 of the introduction to the Gospels in the Oxford Study Bible.)

### Matthew:

The Gospel of Matthew has long been regarded as the most Jewish of the Gospels as it begins with the genealogy of Jesus as the son of David and son of Abraham. It looks at the Jesus movement as it particularly pertains to his ministry among the Jews as a Rabbi and teacher.

### Luke:

The Gospel of Luke was written about 90 CE by a Gentile Christian, one of the first church writers with a real awareness of himself as a literary figure - see 1:1-4. Basic to the design of his work is the place that Luke assigns the career of Jesus in a more comprehensive view of the course of God's dealings with the human family. ...

... But the story of salvation does not end here. It is taken up again in a second volume (Acts of the Apostles) where, in the experience of the church, the way that once led to Jerusalem now extends to "the farthest corners of the earth," (Acts 1:8)

(In the introduction to Luke from the Oxford Study Bible - page 1327)

The Gospel of Luke (in 2:22-40) introduces this Hebrew custom to his readers regarding Mary and Joseph who took the infant Jesus, 40 days after his birth, to complete the ritual purification for Mary after childbirth and the redemption of their firstborn son. It was in obedience to the law recorded in the Torah (Leviticus 12 and Exodus 12:12-15). Luke explicitly points out that Joseph and Mary were poor, so they offered "a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons because they could not afford the traditional Lamb (Leviticus 12:8).

Another later story was when the family visited the Temple when Jesus was about 12 years of age. Luke includes this additional story to perhaps help his Gentile readers understand the Jewishness of Jesus and his faithfulness to his roots.

#### Luke 2:41-52 - GOD'S WORD Translation (GW)

##### Mary and Joseph Find Jesus with the Teachers in the Temple Courtyard

Every year Jesus' parents would go to Jerusalem for the Passover festival. When he was 12 years old, they went as usual. When the festival was over, they left for home. The boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents didn't know it. They thought that he was with the others who were traveling with them. After traveling for a day, they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. When they didn't find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. Three days later, they found him in the temple courtyard. He was sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions. His understanding and his answers stunned everyone who heard him. When his parents saw him, they were shocked. His mother asked him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been worried sick looking for you!" Jesus said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you realize that I had to be in my Father's house?" But they didn't understand what he meant. Then he returned with them to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. Jesus grew in wisdom and maturity. He gained favor from God and people.

### John:

"While the Gospel according to John stands in contrast to Matthew, Mark, and Luke in matters of theological perspective, arrangement of its content, and its distinctive use of imagery and symbols, it nevertheless clearly belongs to the same form of literature as do the other three. Its author, whose identity is unknown, displays exact knowledge both of Palestinian topography and of the Judaism of

Matthew, Mark, and Luke, a tradition which may well go back to John, the son of Zebedee (see 21:2 n.) to whom the book was ascribed in the late second century. In Christian tradition John has often been called “the spiritual” Gospel, because of its attention to the spiritual import of the incidents it reports.

The Gospel is frequently analyzed into “The Book of Signs” (1:19-12:50) and “The Book of Glory” (13:1-20:31), with 1:1-18 as a Prologue and Ch. 21 as an Epilogue. A “sign” is an act of power by Jesus, which points to a truth inaccessible to sight and touch, but apprehensible by faith. Paradoxically, “glory,” an Old Testament term signifying God’s presence, is for the evangelist publicly manifest in the earthly career of Jesus - whom, to eyes of faith, reveals himself as the Son of God in certain significant events and through his death and resurrection.

The Gospel probably originated in Asia Minor, possibly at Ephesus, shortly before the end of the first century.” (In the introduction to John from the Oxford Study Bible - page 1365)

### **The Importance of Early Non-Biblical Content:**

I would recommend at least these books that bring together the wealth of what was textually lost, from the beginning understanding of the New Testament around the end of the 1st century, until the establishment of the official Roman Church by Constantine.

1. Since the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1945 we have learned much more about the lost history of the first several centuries because of fierce divisions. The importance of these is clearly set forth in Elaine Pagels book, *The Gnostic Gospels*, in the introduction:

This campaign against heresy involved an involuntary admission of its persuasive power; yet the bishops prevailed. By the time of the Emperor Constantine’s conversion, when Christianity became an officially approved religion in the fourth century, Christian bishops, previously victimized by the police, now commanded them. Possession of books denounced as heretical was made a criminal offense. Copies of such books were burned and destroyed. But in Upper Egypt, someone, possibly a monk from a nearby monastery of St. Pachomius, took the banned books and hid them from destruction—in the jar where they remained buried for almost 1,600 years.

At the beginning of the 4th century, when Constantine established the Holy Roman Catholic Church with about 200 bishops, the rule of this church was clearly set forth in Elaine’s 5th chapter of *The Gnostic Gospels*:

Lest any “heretic” suggest that Christ may be present even when the bishop is absent, Ignatius sets him straight: It is not legitimate either to baptize or to hold an agape [cult meal] without the bishop ... To join with the bishop is to join the church; to separate oneself from the bishop is to separate oneself not only from the church, but from God himself. Apart from the church hierarchy, he insists, “there is nothing that can be called a church.”

2. *God’s Human Future: The Struggle to Define Theology Today*, by David Galston. In this book David traces the history of human thoughts about God and where we may now be in this 21st century. In his book Galston talks about the Bible, religion, theology, and God, by sharing earlier views with distinct and clear changes over the years and where they are now because of changes in our modern world. Looking in chapter 6, *Finding God in 325*, he points out,

Constantine, somewhat uniquely, restored the dignity of a united Rome while establishing the culture of a Christian society. Even though Constantine only made Christianity legal and did not outlaw pagan and Jewish practices, he clearly saw Christianity as the ascendant vehicle of unity. The gift of the Church, for Constantine, was its built-in hierarchy of power through bishops and its consequent efficiency at dispersing information among the general population. As Eusebius so relays, Constantine understood himself to be the bishop of “external affairs” for the Church, which made the Church like his personal media giant.

In chapter 11 of his book, *Theology and The Opening of Time*, he continues with these thoughts:

Covenant theology is the communal emphasis of theology; it is theology’s move into the community situation and its concern for society. Enlightenment theology is related to the individual, the quest for meaning, and the value of a religious tradition in the act of seeking self-actualization. ... Theology is not about the technical achievements of science. Theology can certainly be informed by science, but its subject is the question of meaning in human existence. ... The theological task is not to decide how much meaning the human place holds in the dynamics of the cosmos. There is no answer to that question on an objective scale other than the obvious answer that human life is only a momentary flash in the unlimited history of the cosmos. ... In other words, reason cannot prove that God exists but reason can prove that it is not possible to prove God does not exist.

These, and many other writers today, point to our need for an awareness of a complete history of our religious heritage with a comprehensive grasp of how religions have developed over the centuries. It demonstrates a vital imperative, in this age of verifiable facts that inform us today, to reconcile our past with the new enlightenments of the coming centuries. Without this kind of progressive revelation of our progress over time it makes it too convenient to claim and hold to beliefs that no longer bring truth in the now. This enables compartmentalizations and divisions creating greater import to one era over another, thus giving superiority over another. The distortion of the first several centuries, without the full exposure of particular views that were deemed unorthodox, is what led to the sad progression of intellectual and social control by the establishment of the Roman church. Given the principles of change, diversity, and equality within the whole of the universe, we must allow for principles throughout the progress of time.

The Christian biblical canons are the books Christians regard as divinely inspired and which constitute a Christian Bible. Which books constituted the Christian biblical canons of both the Old and New Testament was generally established by the 5th century, despite some scholarly disagreements,[1] for the ancient undivided Church (the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions, before the East–West Schism).

[1] (Herbermann, Charles George (1908). *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company,. pp. 272, 273. ISBN 978-1174601828. Retrieved 15 January 2017.)

During the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic canon was reaffirmed by the Catholic Church at the Council of Trent (1546), provided by the Roman Catholic Church. The canons of the Church of England and English Calvinists were decided definitively by the Thirty-Nine Articles (1563) and the Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), respectively. The Synod of Jerusalem (1672) established additional canons that are widely accepted throughout the Orthodox Church. More recently, when a variety of English translations became available in the 20th century, there were heated discussions and wide differences of opinions about their validity. The

definitions of heresy, theology and religious validity seem only the beliefs of those who speak with an assumed singular authority from God.

## **How We Define God:**

<http://www.yhwh.com/gingn/gingn.htm>

I found this rather accurate and informative link online. I will share a portion to summarize key points.

### **God Is Not God's Name**

Introduction:

God is not God's name. That's right. The God of the universe has a name, but "God" isn't it. "God" is what God is. "Human being" is not your name, "Human being" is what you are. You also have a name. Whether it is "Barbara" or "Ken" or "Tom" or "Debbie", you have your own personal name. So does God.

The Biblical Record

In the Judeo-Christian-Islamic religious/cultural tradition, spanning several millennia and the vast majority of the western world, there is only one acknowledged personal name for God. There are many descriptions (the almighty, the beneficent, etc.) but only one personal name of God. The Islamic tradition speaks of the "100 names of Allah", but these are actually titles. The word "Allah" is Arabic for "God", which is English for the Hebrew word "Elohim".

In short, the Name of God revealed to Moses is the most powerful religious truth in the world, a huge canopy under which all other religions and truths reside.

So enough already! What is this name?

Well, Moses asked the same question. You can find this in the Bible, in the third chapter of Exodus, verse 14, "And God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'; and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.'"

So there you have it. God's personal name, as we translate its meaning in English, is "I am that I am." Here are some other ways it has been translated.

He Who is

The self-existent one

He who is ever becoming what He is

Is-ness is is-ness

God's name, the I Am, reveals the fullness of His name.

## **How Do We Define Singularity:**

In the universe, science has the same conundrum when it comes to the Singularity.

<https://www.big-bang-theory.com>

## Big Bang Theory - The Premise:

The Big Bang theory is an effort to explain what happened at the very beginning of our universe. ... Our universe is thought to have begun as an infinitesimally small, infinitely hot, infinitely dense, something - a **singularity**. Where did it come from? We don't know. Why did it appear? We don't know. Is the standard Big Bang theory the only model consistent with these evidences? No, it's just the most popular one. ...

### **Big Bang Theory - What About God?**

Any discussion of the Big Bang theory would be incomplete without asking the question, what about God? This is because cosmogony (the study of the origin of the universe) is an area where science and theology meet. Creation was a supernatural event. That is, it took place outside of the natural realm. This fact begs the question: is there anything else which exists outside of the natural realm? Specifically, is there a master Architect out there? We know that this universe had a beginning. Was God the "First Cause"? We won't attempt to answer that question in this short article. We just ask the question:

### **What We Know and What We Do Not Know:**

It is important for us to accept the fact that we still have a lot to learn as we continue in our evolution, as we have grown to learn and understand more, so we will gradually come to better and more complete understanding of many more aspects of our world and our universe. From earliest times there were always questions about the heavens and how they came to be. The same was true for God. Lots of questions and concerns about the who, what, when, where, and why.

Psalms 139 - God is everywhere

#### Psalms 139 - GOD'S WORD Translation (GW)

- 1 O Lord, you have examined me, and you know me.
- 2 You alone know when I sit down and when I get up.  
You read my thoughts from far away.
- 3 You watch me when I travel and when I rest.  
You are familiar with all my ways.
- 4 Even before there is a single word on my tongue,  
you know all about it, Lord.
- 5 You are all around me—in front of me and in back of me.  
You lay your hand on me.
- 6 Such knowledge is beyond my grasp.  
It is so high I cannot reach it.
- 7 Where can I go to get away from your Spirit?  
Where can I run to get away from you?
- 8 If I go up to heaven, you are there.  
If I make my bed in hell, you are there.
- 9 If I climb upward on the rays of the morning sun  
or land on the most distant shore of the sea where the sun sets,  
10 even there your hand would guide me  
and your right hand would hold on to me.
- 11 If I say, "Let the darkness hide me  
and let the light around me turn into night,"  
12 even the darkness is not too dark for you.

- Night is as bright as day.  
 Darkness and light are the same to you.
- 13 You alone created my inner being.  
 You knitted me together inside my mother.
- 14 I will give thanks to you  
 because I have been so amazingly and miraculously made.  
 Your works are miraculous, and my soul is fully aware of this.
- 15 My bones were not hidden from you  
 when I was being made in secret,  
 when I was being skillfully woven in an underground workshop.
- 16 Your eyes saw me when I was still an unborn child.  
 Every day of my life was recorded in your book  
 before one of them had taken place.
- 17 How precious are your thoughts concerning me, O God!  
 How vast in number they are!
- 18 If I try to count them,  
 there would be more of them than there are grains of sand.  
 When I wake up, I am still with you.
- 19 I wish that you would kill wicked people, O God,  
 and that bloodthirsty people would leave me alone.
- 20 They say wicked things about you.  
 Your enemies misuse your name.
- 21 Shouldn't I hate those who hate you, O Lord?  
 Shouldn't I be disgusted with those who attack you?
- 22 I hate them with all my heart.  
 They have become my enemies.
- 23 Examine me, O God, and know my mind.  
 Test me, and know my thoughts.
- 24 See whether I am on an evil path.  
 Then lead me on the everlasting path.

This meditation from Richard Rohr, in 2018, gives us some similar thought about God today:

### Where Is God?

Friday, January 5, 2018

When I was on retreat at Thomas Merton's hermitage at Gethsemani Abbey in 1985, I had a chance encounter that has stayed with me all these years. I was walking down a little trail when I recognized a recluse, what you might call a hermit's hermit, coming toward me. Not wanting to intrude on his deep silence, I bowed my head and moved to the side of the path, intending to walk past him. But as we neared each other, he said, "Richard!" That surprised me. He was supposed to be silent. How did he know who I was? "Richard, you get chances to preach and I don't. Tell the people one thing." Pointing to the sky, he said, "*God is not 'out there'!*" Then he said, "God bless you," and abruptly continued down the path.

The belief that God is "out there" is the basic dualism that is tearing us all apart. Our view of God as separate and distant has harmed our relationships with sexuality, food, possessions, money, animals, nature, politics, and our own incarnate selves. This loss explains why we live such distraught and divided lives. Jesus came to put it all together for us and in us. He was saying, in effect, "To be human is good! The material and the physical can be trusted and enjoyed. This physical world is the hiding place of God and the revelation place of God!"

Far too much of religion has been about defining where God is and where God isn't, picking and choosing who and what has God's image and who and what doesn't. In reality, it's not up to us. We have no choice in the matter. All are beloved. Everyone—Catholic and Protestant, Christian and Muslim, black and white, gay and straight, able-bodied and disabled, male and female, Republican and Democrat—all are children of God. We are all members of the Body of Christ, made in God's image, indwelled by the Holy Spirit, whether or not we are aware of this gift.

Can you see the image of Christ in the *least* of your brothers and sisters? This is Jesus' only description of the final judgment (Matthew 25). But some say, "They smell. They're a nuisance. They're on welfare. They are a drain on our tax money." Can we see Christ in all people, even the so-called "nobodies" who can't or won't play our game of success? When we can see the image of God where we don't want to see the image of God, then we see with eyes not our own.

Jesus says we have to love and recognize the divine image even in our enemies. *Either we see the divine image in all created things, or we don't see it at all.* Once we see God's image in one place, the circle keeps widening. It doesn't stop with human beings and enemies and the least of our brothers and sisters. It moves to frogs and pansies and weeds. *Everything* becomes enchanting with true sight. We cannot *not* live in the presence of God. We are totally surrounded and infused by God. All we can do is allow, trust, and finally rest in it, which is indeed why we are "saved" by faith—faith that this could be true.

### **The Ineffable:**

Ineffable, "incapable of being expressed in words."

There are still many topics and ideas that we find are rather ineffable but we still need to consider them as honestly as we can. One of these topics is what happens to us when we pass on from this life. The author, Douglas Hammock, opens this discussion in chapter 16 of his book, *Rethinking Our Story: Can We Be Christian In Quantum Era?* Let's look at a few paragraphs:

Again with the Ineffable?!

If our traditional afterlife story was formed as one worldview was being forced on another . . . If our cherished beliefs about the end are actually distortions forged by that tortured process . . . Should we even keep the afterlife in our story?

As biblical scholarship unravels everything we thought we knew about end things, should we just jettison the idea altogether?

When the certainty we once had about the afterlife is shrouded in ambiguity, should we simply dispatch it to the domain of the unknowable and irrelevant?

Jesus didn't.

Questioned on the subject, he indicated his belief in something. What he didn't do was give much texture to what that something might be like. Religious leaders of his day were locked in a great debate. One group said there was nothing on the other side of the grave; the other disagreed. To make their point, the first group posited a man married to seven women in his life. Imagining how ludicrous this poor man's afterlife would be was all the case they felt they needed to make.

Jesus agreed with the absurdity of the notion, but did not dismiss the idea of an afterlife. He insisted that there is something on the other side of the grave, but surely not that. Marrying, giving in marriage, living life the way we live it on earth, whatever the afterlife is, it is not that.

If we are to keep the idea of an afterlife as part of our Christian story, we will be well served returning to Jesus's two basic principles. First, there is something, not nothing. Second, we don't know much about that something. Here again, is mystery.

Here again, if we are to retell our story for the quantum era, we must respect the ineffable. Incomprehensibility and the paradoxical are back. They've always been here. What has changed is our recognition of how important it is to honor them. Our newly-shaped universe is placing this wisdom of our ancestors front and center. Jesus understood the importance of mystery. Nowhere is this more important than in framing our story of the end.

### **Entering Into Mystery:**

Prayer, in many ways, is like entering into mystery, the Ineffable. There are many forms and opinions about prayer. Jesus, along with the Hebrew prophets, clearly had a mystical connection to the Divine when it came to their thoughts and actions. They seemed to use prayer as a way of connecting to God in a similar manner as did Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. The story in Genesis 2 pictures it as a common practice between them and God, who would come down to visit with them in the cool of the evening. It also appeared to be important to God, in whose image they were created, to stay in close communication with humanity. For a long time prayer was seemingly this form of communication with the Creator.

Today, I sense a basic difference in many religions, that prayer is more like asking for answers and for things that are desired. This might be like writing a letter to Santa Claus before Christmas requesting particular gifts to be placed under the Christmas Tree. Another that demonstrates is a popular song, sung by Janis Joplin, "Oh lord won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz. My friends all drive Porsches, I must make amends." It would seem that our primary desire in prayer is no longer communication and friendship but simply requesting favors?

I like to describe the prayers of those earlier Biblical people in an acronym:

**PRAYER [Perusing Reasonable Alternatives Yet Expecting Resolution]**

We each have many mysteries in our lives that we would like to resolve and prayer may be an appropriate way in which to deliberate on these matters. The mystery of our evolution as humans seems to recollect that breath that was infused within us in the creation story, bringing forth our consciousness as human beings. At the time of our birth it is still the first thing that is essential, breathing our first breath. Every time we witness a birth the action of this mystery is still a dramatic moment!

Having fully accepted the invitation of Jesus to follow him, I have learned to enjoy that mystery of prayer and conversation with the one whom he called Father. By understanding that need Jesus formed a relationship with the one who is the "I AM WHO I WILL BE." I too have been able to grow in that love, compassion and grace that enables an abundant life in the now and forever. Just as a sentence cannot be complete without a verb, I too realize my need for this Ineffable Verb who enables me to become all that I am meant to be! The traditional Lord's Prayer is only an outline to begin the conversation. Too often this prayer is said with little or no feedback as a simple, closed ended petition, rather unlike the intense prayer in which Jesus was involved when he prayed.

### **Preparing for the Work of Prayer:**

Prayer must lead to action and work!

In Philippians 2:12-13 (GW) "... continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. It is God who produces in you the desires and actions that please him." God does not do our work! God gives us the desire and strengthens us for the actions that are necessary for our good and the good of the world. It is important to see that prayer is first the "perusal of reasonable alternatives." It is our conversation with God in prayer that

enables the initiation and will for the necessary actions to make prayer efficient and effective. After we are well equipped and certain of the need, then we can move toward “expecting resolution” with fear (respect) and trembling (moving forward). When this aspect of prayer is missing it makes many people think that their prayers are not being answered.

This is the essence of what Jesus was teaching his disciples in the example of the why and how to pray. Santa Claus did not exist in that time so it had nothing to do with whether you were good or bad. In fact, God does not love us because we are good, God loves us because God is good! Prayer is always effective when we get informed, by conversing with that Presence within us, and then gain the how and why we should act by working out our own salvation, (defined as, “deliverance from the power and effects of sin; preservation from destruction or failure.”) Prayer is basically conversation and action. [Let your kingdom, Let your will be done on earth.] As followers of Jesus we are designed to become like Jesus in our time - do as Jesus did. Note the definition of Follower, “one that imitates another.” Prayer will always fail when we are not personally involved in the thought and the action.

While there is nothing essentially wrong with the prayers of Jesus written in scripture, many years that have passed so perhaps a newer expression may suggest expanded ways of understanding that prayer. Here are two examples of “modern” translations of the two brief forms that appear in the Gospels. One that is taken from the revised Book of Common Prayer and the second from a suggestion of my own:

Our Father in Heaven  
Holy is your name  
Your kingdom come  
Your will be done  
On earth as in heaven  
Give us today our daily bread  
Forgive us our sins  
As we forgive those who sin against us  
Lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil

This is my translation and another suggestion for a more modern expression:

Oh Ineffable One,  
The Source of all that is.  
May your caring style be ours on earth.  
Help us find our work to provide basic necessities.  
Forgive us our failures, as we forgive those who have failed us.  
Do not let us fall into temptation, and deliver us from evil.  
Indeed we are grateful you show us the way,  
gift us with truth, and enable us to live well,  
Now and forever. AMEN.