



Beth Langstaff, Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Michael Tilly, eds.

The Lord's Prayer

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The present volume of fifteen essays represents the results of a three-day international, English-German symposium held in the winter of 2018 at the University of Tübingen, Germany. With contributions from different scholars representing various regions of the world, such as Europe, Africa, the Middle East and North America, the volume examines the Lord's Prayer from an interdisciplinary perspective first by exploring its Jewish background, then situating it within the larger context of the New Testament itself, and, finally, analyzing its early reception in second-century Christianity. Along these chronological-thematic lines, five of the contributions investigate the Jewish context of the Lord's Prayer, while six engage with the broader context of the New Testament, with the concluding three essays rounding out the volume with a focus on early receptions of the text in the second century as well as in contemporary Orthodox tradition.

The introduction (1–10) by the editors, Beth Langstaff (†), Loren T. Stuckenbruck, and Michael Tilly, sets out the thematic and methodological focus of the volume, arguing for a fundamental and comprehensive analysis of the Lord's Prayer. Such a comprehensive analysis of the prayer requires studying the text from three focal points, which in turn provide the thematic framework in organizing the various essays in the volume into three parts: (1) the Jewish background of the Lord's Prayer (11–114); (2) the Lord's Prayer in the New Testament (115–230); and (3) reception history in early Christianity (231–82).

Rodney A. Werline (11–27) opens the first part by investigating how redactions of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, Luke, and Didache were meant to shape the practice of piety in the respective communities (11–17) and demonstrating how that reflected similar concerns in selected Second Temple Jewish texts such as Ben Sira, Qumran, and Baruch. Of particular interest for Werline are Daniel and 1 Enoch, by analysis of which he is able to argue for a shift from the usual assumption that prayer in narrative texts presents an ideal character for readers to imitate to considering that there is an assumed knowledge of the practice that allows the narrative audience to identify with the narrative and understand it by themselves.

Cana Werman's (29–50) contribution also draws on selected Second Temple sources to interpret the concluding three petitions of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew. By analyzing these petitions in Matt 6:12–13 in light of Qumran and Jubilees, Werman interprets "debt" in Matt 6:12 in a nonreligious sense of financial debt remission (34) and "evil" in verse 13 in a general, nonpersonified sense (38). Furthermore, Werman examines the entire prayer in the context of wisdom literature and Jewish messianic expectation and notes that, while the worldview of the last part of the Lord's Prayer accords with that found in biblical wisdom literature, it conflicts with the eschatological worldview projected in the opening petitions of the prayer (39–40).

Hermann Lichtenberger (51–68) traces the Jewish and early Christian background of the concept of God as "father" and its cognate "our father in the heavens" in the Lord's Prayer by analyzing relevant texts in the Hebrew Bible, early Jewish writings, and the New Testament, demonstrating its continuity and transformation. Lichtenberger argues that the divine fatherhood of God ultimately speaks of God's care, protection, and readiness to forgive (60, 66).

Judith H. Newman (69–90) situates the Lord's Prayer in the broader context of the pedagogical dimensions of prayer narratives in the literature of early Judaism (Tobit, Ben Sira, and Qumran), noting how the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, Luke, and the Didache aligns with or differs from the broader traditions of early Jewish teaching and practice of prayer, with the admission that the similarities are not to be viewed as literary dependence but a reflection of "broader cultural continuities, or differentiation" (83).

Benjamin G. Wold (91–112) demonstrates the relevance of Qumranic text 4QInstruction for Matthean studies, arguing that 4QInstruction presents significant parallels to Matthew on the issue of debt remission, which has hitherto received less attention. Through the comparative analysis, Wold interprets Matt 6:12, in agreement with Werman, more in terms of remission of actual economic debt than sins, even though he recognizes Matthew's religious use of the concept.

Ulrich Mell's (115–42) contribution opens the second part of the volume, which focuses on the Lord's Prayer in the context of the New Testament. Mell undertakes a redaction-critical analysis of the Sermon on the Mount in Matt 5–7. By considering the Sermon on the Mount as a Christian doctrine

on virtue (*christliche Tugendlehre*) (135), he argues that the Lord's Prayer functions neither as a key to understanding the structure of the Sermon nor as its compositional center; instead, it is the theological centerpiece of the Sermon (140), where the early Christian faith community, oriented on the Torah, depends on the existential loving care of the creator.

Gert J. Steyn (143–59) investigates the theological, cosmological, and eschatological intentions behind the dual reference to “heaven” and “earth” in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew's Gospel. With the Jewish and Hellenistic background in mind, Steyn sees Matthew's use of the heaven-earth terminology as expressing Matthew's cosmological understanding of the entire universe in a dualistic sense of the multilayered domain of God (heavens) above and the earth below, which in turn is influenced by Matthew's eschatology, according to which the heavens and earth are temporary (Matt 5:18; 24:35) and there is a reciprocal influence of events on the two realms (Matt 6:10; 16:19; 18:18–19) (149, 156).

Wilfried Eisele (161–72) addresses the age-old exegetical and theological enigma associated with the temptation petition of the Lord's Prayer: “and lead us not into temptation.” On the basis of Luke's version of the Lord's Prayer, Eisele explores the petition in the thematic complex of faith, temptation, and prayer in Luke and asserts that God is the one who leads to temptation and thus should be seen as the active subject of the petition. Divine temptation is the trial of the disciple's faith and is part of God's salvific act (*Heilshandeln*) (162–63, 171).

Kasper Bro Larsen (173–188) accounts for the absence of the Lord's Prayer in John's Gospel by arguing that the Fourth Evangelist actually betrays knowledge of the Matthean version of the Lord's Prayer in John 17, which he knew as a liturgical text in his community (174, 185). For Larsen, John 17 is, however, a “rewritten prayer” that rewrites and alters all the petitions of the Lord's Prayer in accordance with Johannine theology; such rewriting is consistent with contemporary early Jewish practice evident in Qumran (174–75, 185).

Dennis R. Lindsay (189–209) contributes to the discussion of the Lord's Prayer in the context of the New Testament by exploring the relationship between *pistis* (faith) and prayer, using Luke 18 as a point of departure. Arguing from a biblical-theological perspective, Lindsay concludes that the Lord's Prayer presents a key to understanding the relationship between faith and prayer because its petitions present the right focus of prayer, particularly the forgiveness petition (208).

Karl-Heinrich Ostmeyer (211–27) shifts the discussion on the Lord's Prayer from the usual exegetical focus on tradition, source, form, or philological criticism to exploring the didactic function of the prayer text in relation to its implied audiences in Matthew and Luke (215, 218). In contrast to Werline above, Ostmeyer argues that the prayer's didactic function is its construction of an ideal praying individual (*Ideal-Beter*) whom those who pray it daily are required to mimic (218). Thus, the invocation, for instance, sets the praying believer in a father-child relationship that imposes a

responsibility on one to strive to become what one is asking the Father God for in prayer (220–23, 225).

Tobias Nicklas (231–51) opens the final part of the volume, on the reception of the Lord's Prayer in early Christianity, by investigating references and allusions to the prayer in second-century Christian literature, specifically the Didache, the Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians, 1 Clement, and selected apocryphal texts (232–48). Nicklas frames his investigation with the question of how the evidence of the reception of the Lord's Prayer in these texts could demonstrate that the Lord's Prayer was theologically studied and interpreted as well as formed part of the lived religion (*gelebte Religion*) in the second century (232). He concludes that the reception history of the text reveals that the Lord's Prayer was part of the "social memory" (*soziales Gedächtnis*) of the early Christians that could be theologically and ethically activated in different contexts (235, 242, 248).

Ronald E. Heine (253–67) turns attention to Origen's reception of the Lord's Prayer in his *On Prayer* by analyzing the interpretation of the prayer in this treatise. Heine demonstrates how Rom 8:26 and the agraphon of Jesus regarding seeking greater and heavenly things (otherwise not attested in canonical and noncanonical sources) form the hermeneutical key with which Origen interprets the Lord's Prayer as containing things for which believers ought to pray, which are the great and heavenly things (265).

Konstantin Nikolakopoulos (269–82) closes the volume with an Orthodox perspective on the liturgical reception of the Lord's Prayer in Eastern Christian worship. Against the background of the liturgical orientation of Orthodox exegesis and the cultic use of the Bible in worship, Nikolakopoulos observes two liturgical receptions of the Lord's Prayer: as a prayer text and as a source of hymnographic inspiration for the composition of other liturgical hymns (273–80).

In all, the volume offers a rich, multiperspectival exploration of one of the New Testament's most popular texts. The three-part framework that situates the discussion of the Lord's Prayer within early Judaism, the New Testament itself, and reception history in early Christian thought and Orthodox liturgy presents a comprehensive view of the prayer's origins, development, and enduring significance. It equally endows the volume its scholarly rigor and breadth of perspectives that deepens our understanding of the text. The richness that the Orthodox perspective particularly adds to the volume implies that exploring the Lord's Prayer in other Christian traditions, for instance, as Pentecostal-charismatic Christianities (especially in the Global South) will be a fruitful venture to undertake in similar volumes in the future.