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# Why do Christians pray to Jesus?

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Recently I was asked why Christians pray to Jesus. When the question was asked, I was also asked why Christians would pray to Jesus, when Jesus is Jewish. I will do my best to give a response based on the teaching of the Bible, especially the New Testament.

First of all, the distinction between Jews and Christians doesn't change our relationship to Jesus. "There is neither Jew nor Greek ... for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28-9). "If then you were raised with Christ ... there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all in all" (Colossians 1:1a, 11).

The Apostle Peter had a vision about eating foods that were not kosher (Acts 10:9-16). Three times Peter was told to eat the unclean foods. Three times he was told, "What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15). The basic idea is that Peter isn't supposed to consider any foods as unfit for eating, even though the Old Testament Law identified some foods as "common" or "unclean." When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave all foods became clean. Jesus Himself had said, "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man: but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man" (Matthew 15:11).

After Peter's vision, there was an occasion when both Peter and Paul were present, and Peter didn't eat with the Gentile Christians. Paul confronted Peter because he was acting like Jews were better than Gentiles (Galatians 2:11-21). Peter conceded that Paul was right.

The point is, both Jews and Gentiles can know salvation through Jesus Christ.

Second, Christians are instructed to pray by making requests in Jesus' name, "If you ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14:14). Christians are taught that Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father in heaven and intercedes to the Father on behalf of Christians (Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:24).

So why do Christians pray to Jesus? Jesus is called, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (Revelation 19:16). He is worshipped by angels (Hebrews 1:6), by the Magi at His birth (Matthew 2:1, 2, 11), by men (John 9:30-38), by women (Matthew 15:25), by disciples (Matthew 28:17), by a heavenly choir (Revelation 4:11), by the twenty-four elders in heaven (Revelation 4:10, and by everyone (Philippians 2:10). Prayer is a part of worship. So, since Jesus is supposed to be worshipped, it seems reasonable to assume Christians should also pray to Him.

It could be pointed out that when Jesus taught His disciples how to pray he told them to pray to the heavenly Father (Matthew 6:9). On the other hand, there are examples of Christians praying to "the Lord" (Acts 1:24; 8:24). Jesus is sometimes called, "Lord" (Matthew 17:4). So, these examples of praying to the Lord could refer to Christians when they were praying to Jesus.

Third, Christ grafts Christians into the inheritance of Abraham (Romans 11:13-19 – but this passage is somewhat complicated and difficult to follow). The idea is that Abraham was promised, by God, that all the nations of the earth would be blessed by his descendants (Genesis 18:18; 22:18). This promise is fulfilled by Jesus, the descendent, or seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16). Or, as Paul says, "Therefore only those who are of faith are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham" (Galatians 3:7-9). Paul's point is that Christians are justified by faith, as was Abraham (Galatians 3:6).

God promised Abraham that he would have descendants like the stars of the sky or the sand of the seashore (Genesis 22:17). Christians understand this promise as applying to the Jewish people and also to those who put their faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:7).

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No conflict is involved when Christians pray to Jesus, who is a Jew. In fact, Jesus Christ, when He died on the cross and rose again, brought Christians into the promise that was originally given to Abraham. The entire Christian Gospel grows out of the promises given to Abraham, as Christians interpret those promises (see Galatians 3). Instead of this being a source of division, Christians understand it as the foundation of their unity as Christians. They are one in Christ (Ephesians 2:14-16). Without unity with Christ, there would be no Christians at all.

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