THE QUESTION

Did the early Christians pray to Jesus?

Asked by a THF member on June 27, 2026 · published November 9, 2026 · 10 numbered quotations · the 32 early Christian passages and 70 Bible verses we kept are listed at the back, each with a link.

Read it online: thehistoricfaith.com/early-church-questions/did-the-early-christians-pray-to-jesus

The short answer *Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words*

Sometimes, though most prayers in these passages go to the Father through Christ. Irenaeus says the church prays to the Lord while calling on the name of Jesus Christ, and Tatian's Gospel has Jesus promise to do what is asked in His name. These passages show calling on Jesus' name more than prayers spoken directly to Him.

LIBRARY ONLY	This study was written only from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible, never from the web. Every passage we kept from what the library gave is listed at the back, with a link to read it.
HOW IT WAS MADE	Compiled by machine learning from The Historic Faith's library of early-Christian writings and the Bible only. Every quotation was matched word for word against our stored text. Not yet reviewed by The Historic Faith.
SHARING WITH AN AI?	Every quotation here comes from The Historic Faith's library. If you paste this study into an AI, anything it adds beyond these pages comes from that AI, not from us.

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POINT 1 OF 7

The church called on the name of Jesus

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Irenaeus contrasts the church with magicians. The church prays to the Lord who made all things and calls on the name of Jesus Christ, and through that name the sick are still healed.

1

"Instead, she prays to the Lord, who made all things, with a pure, sincere, and straightforward spirit, calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

later in the same passage

"Therefore, if the name of our Lord Jesus Christ still provides benefits and thoroughly cures all who believe in Him, unlike Simon, Menander, Carpocrates, or any other person, it is clear that when He became man, He connected with His own creation and accomplished all things truly through the power of God, according to the will of the Father of all, as the prophets had foretold."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book II* (c. 175–202 AD) **Source 9, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

POINT 2 OF 7

Jesus promised to answer requests in His name

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

Tatian's harmony of the Gospels keeps both sayings side by side. In one Jesus says He Himself will do what is asked in His name; in the other the Father gives what is asked in His name.

2

"Whatever you ask in my name, I will do for you, so that the Father may be glorified in his Son."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tatian,** *Diatessaron* 45 (c. 150–180 AD) **Source 5, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

3

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give you."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Tatian,** *Diatessaron* 47 (c. 150–180 AD) **Source 8, page 6** **Read it in the library ›**
THF's updated English

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POINT 3 OF 7

Calling on Christ's name was a known practice

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

Cyprian warns that calling on Christ's name does not bring grace to those outside the true faith. His warning assumes that Christians did call on the name of Christ.

4 “But the Lord Himself shows that not all who call on the name of Christ are heard, and that their calling on Him cannot obtain any grace, when He says, "Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am Christ,' and will deceive many."”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Epistles* (c. 248–258 AD) **Source 24, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

POINT 4 OF 7

Most prayers went to the Father through Christ

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

The prayers in the church rules are spoken to God the Father. Christ is named as the One through whom the prayer is offered and glory is given.

5 “But after the previous prayer, let him pray like this and say: O God Almighty, the Father of Your Christ, Your only begotten Son, give me a body that is undefiled, a pure heart, a watchful mind, knowledge that does not go astray, and the influence of the Holy Spirit for obtaining and surely enjoying the truth, through Your Christ, through whom be glory to You in the Holy Spirit forever.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 29, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

6 “Let us continue to pray to God through His Christ.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 26, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

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POINT 5 OF 7

Cyprian prays to the Father with Christ's words

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Cyprian urges believers to pray the Lord's Prayer, so the Father hears His Son's own words. He calls Christ our Advocate with the Father, the One who pleads for us.

7

"Let the Father recognize the words of His Son when we pray."

later in the same passage

"And since we have Him as an Advocate with the Father for our sins, let us, when we sinners make our request for our sins, use the words of our Advocate."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Cyprian,** *Treatises* (c. 248–258 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 22, page 7 **Read it in the library ›**

POINT 6 OF 7

Irenaeus prays to the Father through Christ

Our note · compiled by machine learning · From the text: says what the passages say

Irenaeus writes his own prayer into his book. He calls on the God of Abraham, the Father of Jesus Christ, and asks Him to grant the Holy Spirit through Christ.

8

"Therefore, I also call upon you, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob and Israel, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God who, through the abundance of Your mercy, has shown favor to us, that we should know You, who made heaven and earth, who rules over all, who is the only and true God, above whom there is no other God; grant, through our Lord Jesus Christ, the governing power of the Holy Spirit; give to every reader of this book the knowledge that You alone are God, to be strengthened in You, and to avoid every heretical, godless, and impious doctrine."

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Irenaeus,** *Against Heresies: Book III* (c. 175–202 AD)
THF's updated English

Source 10, page 6 **Read it in the library ›**

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POINT 7 OF 7

Worship still hailed Jesus as Lord and God

Our note · compiled by machine learning · Interpretation: our reading of the passages, not their words

Even in prayers to the Father, the liturgies honor Jesus. One calls Him our Lord and God, and another hails Him with a Hosanna as God the Lord who came in the flesh.

9 “O Lord our God, give us Your rest and peace all the days of this life, so that all the people of the earth may know You: that You are the only true God the Father, and that You sent our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son and Your beloved. And He Himself, our Lord and God, came and taught us all purity and holiness.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Early Liturgies,** *Liturgy of Adaeus and Maris* 1 (c. 200–400 AD) **Source 17, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

10 “Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, God the Lord, who was manifested to us in the flesh.”

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITER **Apostolic Constitutions** (c. 250–380 AD) **Source 27, page 7** Read it in the library ›
THF's updated English

THE LIMITS

What these passages don’t tell us

- These passages do not include a full prayer spoken directly to Jesus.
- Irenaeus ties calling on Jesus' name to healing and miracles and does not give the words used.
- A word-for-word match shows that a quotation really is in our text. It does not show that our reading of it is right, or who wrote each work.

WHERE EVERY QUOTE CAME FROM

The Sources

The 32 early Christian passages and 70 Bible verses we kept for this question (repeats and weak or off-topic search hits were left out): early Christian passages first (sources 1–32, grouped by writer, earliest first), then Bible verses in The Faith Once Delivered Bible (source 33, in Bible order), then 69 more verses THF links to these passages, by reference. **Quote 1, page 2** beside a source shows where the study quotes it. Passages are in THF’s updated English unless marked “1885 English” (the Roberts–Donaldson translation, public domain).

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"… [continues online]" marks a passage the library gave only in part. **On paper?** At **thehistoricfaith.com**, Bible verses are in the **Audio Bible** and early Christian writings in the **Library** (search for the title).

EARLY CHRISTIAN WRITERS *32 passages from 11 writers*

Didache, *c. 50–120 AD · source 1*

1 *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* 8 (1885 English; on point 4) "kingdom come. Your will be done, as in heaven, so on earth… [continues online] **read ›**

Ignatius of Antioch, *c. 98–117 AD · sources 2–4*

2 *Epistle to Polycarp* (1885 English; on point 7) "pray for your happiness for ever in our God, Jesus Christ, by whom continue ye in the unity and under the protection of God… [continues online] **read ›**

3 *Epistles of Ignatius* (1885 English) "I enjoy your prayers! Pray ye that I may attain to Jesus… [continues online] **read ›**

4 *Epistle to the Romans* (1885 English; on point 1) "Christ for me, that by these instruments I may be found a sacrifice [to God… [continues online] **read ›**

Tatian, *c. 150–180 AD · sources 5–8*

5 *Diatessaron* 45 (1885 English) **Quote 2, page 2** "14:14 And if you 43, 44 ask me in my name, I will do it… [continues online] **read ›**

6 *Diatessaron* 46 (1885 English; on point 2) "that all that you shall ask my Father in my name, he may give you… [continues online] **read ›**

7 *Diatessaron* 9 (on point 4) you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand in the synagogues and at the corners of the marketplaces to pray, so that men may see them… [continues online] **read ›**

8 *Diatessaron* 47 (1885 English) **Quote 3, page 2** "verily, verily, I say unto you, All that you ask my Father in my name, he will give you… [continues online] **read ›**

Irenaeus, *c. 175–202 AD · sources 9–11*

9 *Against Heresies: Book II* (1885 English) **Quote 1, page 2** "directing her prayers to the Lord, who made all things, in a pure, sincere, and straightforward spirit, and calling upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, she has been… [continues online] **read ›**

10 *Against Heresies: Book III* (1885 English) **Quote 8, page 4** "by our Lord Jesus Christ, the governing power of the Holy Spirit… [continues online] **read ›**

11 *Against Heresies: Book V* (1885 English; on point 1) "he says that the things which save are the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Spirit of our God… [continues online] **read ›**

Clement of Alexandria, *c. 190–215 AD · sources 12–13*

12 *Exhortation to the Heathen* 12 (on point 5) "Jesus, who is eternal, the one great High Priest of the one God and of His Father… [continues online] **read ›**

13 *Instructor* 3.12 (1885 English; on point 7) "of all time and space, Jesus, Saviour of our race… [continues online] **read ›**

Tertullian, *c. 196–220 AD · sources 14–16*

14 *Against Praxeas* 28 (on point 4) or Shod. It is only something added to a name. Suppose now that by some means Jesus were also called Vestitus, that is, Clothed, just as He is in fact… [continues online] **read ›**

15 *On Prayer* 14 (1885 English) "taking our model from the Lord's passion even in prayer we confess to Christ… [continues online] **read ›**

16 *On Prayer* 5 "Lord, Your kingdom come with all speed — the prayer of Christians, the confusion of the heathen, the exultation of angels, for the sake of… [continues online] **read ›**

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Early Liturgies, *c. 200–400 AD · sources 17–21*

17 *Liturgy of Adaeus and Maris* 1 (1885 English) **Quote 9, page 5** “Lord our God, bestow on us Your rest and peace all the days of this life, that all the inhabitants of the earth may know You, that You are the… [continues online] **read ›**

18 *Divine Liturgy of St. Mark* 1 (1885 English; on point 7) “Sovereign and Almighty Lord, King of heaven, while we show forth the death of Your only-begotten Son, our Lord, God, and Saviour Jesus Christ, and acknowledge His blessed resurrection… [continues online] **read ›**

19 *Liturgy of Adaeus and Maris* 1 (1885 English; on point 4) “O Lord God Almighty, we beseech and entreat, perfect with us Your grace, and pour out through our hands Your gift, the pity and compassion of Your divinity… [continues online] **read ›**

20 *Liturgy of Adaeus and Maris* 1 (1885 English; on point 7) “O our Lord and God, the movements of our meditations to hear and understand the sweet listenings to Your life-giving and divine commands… [continues online] **read ›**

21 *Divine Liturgy of St. James* 1 (1885 English; on point 4) “us offer supplication to God the Lord… [continues online] **read ›**

Cyprian, *c. 248–258 AD · sources 22–25*

22 *Treatises* (1885 English) **Quote 7, page 4** “is a loving and friendly prayer to beseech God with His own word, to come up to His ears in the prayer of Christ… [continues online] **read ›**

23 *Treatises* (on point 5) all things, the Teacher of peace and the Master of unity did not want prayer to be made separately and individually, as if each person should pray only for himself… [continues online] **read ›**

24 *Epistles* **Quote 4, page 3** “that not all who call on the name of Christ are heard… [continues online] **read ›**

25 *Epistles* (1885 English; on point 5) “each one of us pray God not for himself only, but for all the brethren, even as the Lord has taught us to pray, when He bids to each one… [continues online] **read ›**

Apostolic Constitutions, *c. 250–380 AD · sources 26–30*

26 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) **Quote 6, page 3** “Let us still further beseech God through His Christ, and let us beseech Him on account of the gift which is offered to the Lord God, that the good God… [continues online] **read ›**

27 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) **Quote 10, page 5** “this Your kingdom come. Hosanna to the Son of David… [continues online] **read ›**

28 *Apostolic Constitutions* (on point 4) us pray for the peace and good order of the world, and of the holy churches, so that the God of the whole world may give us His everlasting peace… [continues online] **read ›**

29 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English) **Quote 5, page 3** “But let him pray thus after the foregoing prayer, and say: O God Almighty, the Father of Your Christ, Your only begotten Son, give me a body undefiled, a heart… [continues online] **read ›**

30 *Apostolic Constitutions* (1885 English; on point 5) “this let him stand up, and pray that prayer which the Lord taught us… [continues online] **read ›**

Methodius, *c. 270–311 AD · source 31*

31 *Oration Concerning Simeon and Anna* 1 “me rejoicing, O Lord, and singing of Your mercy and compassion… [continues online] **read ›**

Anonymous · *source 32*

32 *Treatise on Re-Baptism* 1 (on point 3) “such an invocation would not avail if it should remain alone, because after the death of a man… [continues online] **read ›**

THE BIBLE *1 verse, The Faith Once Delivered Bible (Old Testament from the Septuagint), in Bible order*

33 **Matthew 21:9** The crowds who went in front of him, and those who followed, kept shouting, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!” **read ›**

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ALSO LINKED BY THF TO THESE PASSAGES *69 verses, by reference*

Partly machine-linked: related to the passages, not always quoted in them. Each reference links to the verse in our audio Bible.

Isaiah 58:6

Matthew 6:5 · 6:11 · 6:13 · 19:29 · 21:23 · 21:31 · 23:21 · 24:3 · 25:41 · 28:19

Mark 2:10 · 9:23 · 11:10 · 14:27

Luke 1:79 · 2:14 · 2:29 · 11:3 · 11:48

John 1:3 · 2:22 · 4:2 · 4:9 · 12:13 · 20:17

Acts 2:30 · 2:36 · 3:1 · 4:27 · 9:20 · 10:9

Romans 1:8 · 2:4 · 2:7 · 2:14 · 6:3 · 6:8 · 7:18 · 8:11 · 14:8 · 15:24 · 16:7

1 Corinthians 2:15 · 5:11 · 6:9 · 6:11 · 10:5 · 12:4 · 15:44 · 16:22

2 Corinthians 3:6 · 7:1

Galatians 1:1 · 1:19 · 2:12 · 5:19

Ephesians 1:17 · 5:6

Colossians 2:4

1 Timothy 2:2

Titus 2:14

2 Peter 3:9

1 John 1:3 · 2:22 · 4:2 · 5:1 · 5:6

Revelation 6:10

Searched: Ante-Nicene Fathers volumes 1–9 and the Bible, including the Septuagint.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

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