

# The Living Words

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## ~~ Pray ~~

Words like “holy” and “worship” are what I call religious words—invented words with religious connotations that have nothing to do with the Hebrew language of the Bible. Prayer is another one of these words.

*So Abraham **prayed** unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children.*

Genesis 20:17 (KJV)

In our modern religious culture, prayer is a communication between man and God. While this definition can be applied to some passages of the Bible, such as in the verse above, it is not a Hebraic definition of the Hebrew word פָּלַל *palal* <sup>[H:6419]</sup> which is “to fall down to the ground in the presence of one in authority pleading a cause,” “to intercede.” This action can be seen in Isaiah 45:14 where the Sabeans fall down and make supplication to Cyrus.

*...and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make **supplication** (*palal*) unto thee...*

(KJV)

I remember when I was in Sunday School we were taught that “praying” to God was more like “talking” to him like we do with a friend. So, what is the Hebrew word for “talking”? That would be דָּבַר *davar* <sup>[H:1696]</sup>.

*And Yahweh talked with Moses face to face just as a man talks with his friend.*

Exodus 33:11

This verse brings up an interesting dilemma when we compare Exodus 33:11 with Exodus 33:20.

*And [Yahweh] said, you cannot see my face because man cannot see me and live.*

In one verse, we have Moses talking with God face to face, but just a few verses later God tells him no man can see his face and live. Is this a contradiction in the text? I don't think so. If you will recall in our discussion on the word "face," we looked at a couple of other verses from this same chapter.

*And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I sware unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it: And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite: Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.*

Exodus 33:1-3 (KJV)

We also read later in the chapter:

*And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.*

Exodus 33:14 (KJV)

Yahweh is not going to lead Israel to the Promised Land but instead sends his “face” to lead them. The “face” can, in Hebraic thought, be another person who acts with the same personality as the sender<sup>1</sup>. This “face” is identified as a messenger of Yahweh in verse 2; therefore the “face” of Yahweh is synonymous with the “messenger” of Yahweh. Apparently, in Exodus 33:11, Moses is talking with Yahweh but in Exodus 33:20 he is speaking with the “face” of Yahweh.

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<sup>1</sup> See the discussion on “Face” on page **Error! Bookmark not defined.**