



# A critical analysis of Purnomo and colleagues' interpretation in Matthew 6:9–13



## Authors:

Harman Z. Laia<sup>1</sup> Sri Binar<sup>1</sup> 

## Affiliations:

<sup>1</sup>Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Injili  
Indonesia Surabaya,  
Surabaya, Indonesia

## Corresponding author:

Harman Laia,  
laiaharman@gmail.com

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The reinterpretation of the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9–13) as a prayer of thanksgiving rather than petition, based on their argument that the aorist tense in imperative and/or subjunctive verbs signifies actions completed in the past, along with their critique of the Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia (LAI) translation as erroneous, sparked debates among Christians in Indonesia and was leveraged by non-Christian groups to question the Bible's authenticity. This study aimed to evaluate the validity of Purnomo et al.'s research by focussing on their interpretation of the aorist tense in imperative and/or subjunctive verbs, research methodology, use of literature, critique of the LAI translation and theological implications. A comprehensive review of literature and exegesis was conducted to analyse the grammatical, linguistic, methodological and theological aspects of the text. Based on a detailed examination, this study found that their interpretation of the aorist tense in imperative and/or subjunctive verbs in the prayer was unsupported by linguistic evidence and contradicted the principles of biblical Greek grammar, where the aorist tense emphasises 'aspect' rather than 'time' (e.g., 'past tense') of actions. Consequently, the theology derived from their study was flawed. Moreover, the study affirmed that the LAI translation accurately reflects the original context of the text. This research concluded that Purnomo et al.'s interpretation of the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9–13) contained significant theological and linguistic errors that require revision.

**Contribution:** This research critically contributes to biblical theology by addressing interpretative challenges in Matthew 6:9–13, refuting claims that the Lord's Prayer expresses gratitude based on the aorist tense. It reaffirms the prayer as a supplication, grounded in biblical Greek grammar and theology, while defending the accuracy of the LAI translation. Advancing critical exegesis, the study promotes rigorous theological discourse and a deeper understanding of Scripture.

**Keywords:** the Lord's Prayer; LAI; aorist tense; prayer of petition; prayer of thanksgiving.

## Introduction

Purnomo and his colleagues (2024) explicitly articulated the objective of their research titled *The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13: Reconstructing Based On Byzantine Text* (2024), which was to argue that the text should not be understood as a prayer of petition, as is commonly assumed by the majority of scholars, but rather as a 'prayer of thanksgiving' that carries theological significance (Purnomo et al. 2024:3). They asserted that the 'kingdom of God' (v. 10) is not something anticipated in the future but is a reality that has already been manifested in the present context (Purnomo et al. 2024:3, 8).

One crucial element in evaluating this research is the criticism directed towards the Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia (LAI), which is deemed inaccurate in translating the Lord's Prayer (Purnomo et al. 2024:4). This critique was not only presented in their research publication but also during an online seminar held by Purnomo, where he emphasised that the LAI translation contained errors based on their study.<sup>1</sup> This statement has significant implications for the world of theology and the Christian faith, triggering unease among theologians and the Christian community in Indonesia, and it has also been exploited by non-Christian parties to cast doubt on and attack the authenticity of the Bible. Therefore, the Christian community in Indonesia is currently eagerly awaiting an academic evaluation in response to the research conducted by Purnomo and his colleagues. Thus, this research emerges as an answer to the tensions that have arisen.

To support their argument, Purnomo and his colleagues identified three contradictions that arise if the Lord's Prayer is understood as a prayer of petition:

1. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vqRTxiWxTMU>.

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1. Forgiveness (Mt 6:12, 14) (Purnomo et al. 2004:3–4): Purnomo and his colleagues argued that Matthew 6:14 does not discuss the condition under which believers are forgiven by the Father, but rather the response of believers to the forgiveness they have received from the Father. Therefore, if ‘forgiveness’ in Matthew 6:12 is considered a petition, this theologically contradicts the fact that forgiveness from God has already occurred (been manifested) for believers through the death of Christ on the cross.
2. Aorist form in seven verbs (Purnomo et al. 2004:4): Purnomo and his colleagues asserted that the aorist form of the verbs ἁγιασθήτω [hallowed], ἐλθέτω [come], γενηθήτω [be], δός [give], ἄφες [forgive], μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς [lead not] and ῥῶσαι [deliver] indicates that these actions have occurred and been perfectly completed in the past. Therefore, the seven actions do not refer to actions currently in progress or those that will occur in the future, and should instead be understood as expressions of gratitude for what God has done.
3. The verb προσεύχουμαι (Mt 6:9) (Purnomo et al. 2004:4–5): Purnomo and his colleagues argued that if the prayer was intended by Jesus as a prayer of petition, why did he not use the verb δέομαι, which specifically denotes a request or petition? In this context, they contended that the use of the verb προσεύχουμαι by Jesus does not reflect the idea of asking or pleading, but rather is more of an expression of gratitude to God.

After identifying these three contradictions, Purnomo and his colleagues analysed the text of the Lord’s Prayer, focussing on the aorist tense analysis of the seven verbs in the prayer, the analysis of the aorist imperative mood and a grammatical analysis of the entire text:

1. Aorist tense analysis (Purnomo et al. 2004:5–6): Purnomo and his colleagues concluded that the meaning of the aorist in Greek refers to the views of Burton (1898) and Weymouth (1891), which state that the tense should be understood as indicating actions that have occurred perfectly in the past.
2. Aorist imperative mood analysis (Purnomo et al. 2004:6): Purnomo and his colleagues noted that six out of the seven verbs in the Lord’s Prayer use the aorist imperative mood, which does not signify a petition or command but rather actions that have already occurred. This mood should be translated in the indicative form for several reasons: Firstly, the use of the aorist tense indicating actions that have already occurred; secondly, the use of the verb προσεύχουμαι for the word ‘prayer’ (v. 9), reflecting an action of gratitude; and thirdly, Jesus’s statement in Matthew 6:8, which they assume emphasises that there is no need to ask, as God already knows what believers need before they ask.
3. Grammatical analysis (Purnomo et al. 2004:7): Purnomo and his colleagues divided Matthew 6:9–13 into two groups based on the voice of the seven verbs in the text: Petitions 1–3 (hallowed, come, be, vv. 9–10) have passive (2) and active (1) voice forms, while petitions 4–7

(give, forgive, lead not, deliver, vv. 11–13) all use active voice. According to Purnomo and his colleagues, these last four petitions have occurred perfectly in the past because they use the aorist tense. Specifically, for the phrase μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς, they stated that this is an unreal action and a probabilistic statement.

In conclusion, Purnomo and his colleagues noted several consequences if the Lord’s Prayer is regarded as a prayer of petition: rejection of the kingdom of God that has come, rejection that the Lord has provided daily bread for believers, rejection that the Lord has forgiven sin, rejection that the Lord does not lead us into temptation, and rejection that the Lord has delivered humanity from evil (Purnomo et al. 2004:8).

## Objective

This study aims to provide an evaluation of Purnomo and his colleagues’ research by considering several significant theological and hermeneutical aspects. The evaluation and critique will focus on several key points as follows:

Firstly, an evaluation of the analysis of the aorist tense within the imperative and subjunctive moods. One issue that requires scrutiny is Purnomo and his colleagues’ understanding of the aorist’s use in the imperative mood concerning the seven verbs in the prayer. They argue that the aorist imperative and subjunctive forms reflect actions that have occurred in the past. This examination is essential to test the consistency and accuracy of their linguistic analysis and its impact on text interpretation.

Secondly, an evaluation of the research methodology. The methods employed by Purnomo and his colleagues need to be assessed based on the validity and reliability of the data, particularly concerning the approach used in constructing their arguments. Methodological accuracy is crucial to ensure that their conclusions are sound and justifiable.

Thirdly, an evaluation of the literature used. Assessing the sources referenced in this research is vital for evaluating the integrity and credibility of the arguments presented. The use of inadequate or biased literature can affect the validity of the research conclusions.

Fourthly, a defence of the LAI translation. This study must also consider a defence of the LAI translation, which has been deemed inaccurate by Purnomo and his colleagues.

Fifthly, an evaluation of the theology of the Lord’s Prayer. From a theological perspective, Purnomo and his colleagues’ understanding of the Lord’s Prayer as a thanksgiving prayer should be evaluated for its broader implications on the theology they produce. This research seeks to assess whether their approach enriches the understanding of prayer or instead generates confusion.

This evaluation, highlighting these aspects, aims to deepen the theological understanding of the Lord's Prayer and assess the relevance and accuracy of the arguments presented, with the hope of contributing meaningfully to contemporary theological discussions.

## Methodology

This study employs a combination of literature review and textual exegesis methods, focussing specifically on the seven verbs within the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13. The literature review is utilised to evaluate the first three focal points: the analysis of aorist in the imperative and subjunctive moods, the research methodology, and the literature employed by Purnomo and his colleagues. In contrast, textual exegesis is applied to examine the final two focal points, which include the defence of the LAI translation and the theology of the Lord's Prayer. Through the integration of literature review and textual exegesis, this research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the arguments presented by Purnomo and his colleagues while contributing a broader perspective to the theological discussion surrounding the Lord's Prayer.

## Ethical considerations

Ethical approval to conduct this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Commission of the Evangelical Theological Seminary of Indonesia (No. 00263/KEP-STTII Sby/EC/III/2024).

## Results

### Evaluation of aorist analysis in the imperative mood

#### Significance of aorist imperative tense

The research conducted by Purnomo and his colleagues focusses on the aorist imperative syntax of the seven verbs in Matthew 6:9–13, namely, ἁγιασθήτω [hallowed be], ἐλθέτω [come], γενηθήτω [be], δός [give], ἄφες [forgive], μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς [do not bring] and ῥῶσαι [deliver]. These seven verbs are primarily in the aorist imperative mood, with one in the aorist subjunctive. However, a pertinent question arises: Does the aorist tense in the imperative indicate a level of 'time' (present, past, future)?

Blass and Debrunner (1961) note that the original function of tense in Indo-European languages is not to denote levels of 'time' but rather to indicate Aktionsarten (types of action) or aspect (perspective). In this context, the action type in the aorist is punctiliar, meaning the action is viewed as a point with an emphasised beginning or end, or as a whole without regard for duration.

Several linguists support this view. Hewett (2009) indicates that tense (both aorist and present) in the imperative does not refer to the timing of the action performed. Robertson (1919), a Greek grammatical scholar, cites Moulton to assert that no element of time is contained within the aorist imperative.

Croy (1999) also contends that tense in the imperative mood focusses more on the type of action rather than on 'time'. Mounce (2019) adds that the only significance of tense form (aorist or present) in the imperative is aspect; in this context, the aorist imperative is perfective, describing an undefined action. Wallace (1996) confirms that outside of the indicative and participial forms, in modes such as the imperative, subjunctive, optative and others, 'time' is not a feature of the aorist.

Therefore, the claim made by Purnomo and his colleagues that the aorist tense in the imperative of the seven verbs in Matthew 6:9–13 emphasises 'past time' or indicates actions that have occurred in the past lacks a strong foundation and cannot be scientifically justified. This assessment indicates that their interpretation of the aorist tense within the imperative context needs revision, taking into account more appropriate linguistic aspects and the perspectives of relevant scholars.

### Function of the imperative in Matthew 6:9–13

Mounce (2019) observes that the imperative not only functions as a command but can also serve as a request (imperative of request) and prohibition. In the context of Matthew 6:9–13, the question arises: Does the aorist imperative function as a request? Kostenberger, Merkle and Plummer (2016) note that the imperative can be understood as a request when the command is directed towards an individual of higher status. In such situations, the command transforms into a polite request. Therefore, in the context of prayer, a person of lower social status would not command someone of higher status to act, but would instead make a request.

Wallace (1996) states that requests in the imperative mood almost always appear in aorist form and are frequently used by speakers addressing individuals of higher status, such as God in prayer. Based on this view, Wallace, Mounce, and Kostenberger, Merkle, and Plummer identify the verbs ἐλθέτω [come], γενηθήτω [be] and δός [give] in Matthew 6:10–11 as examples of imperative requests. Meanwhile, Alan Black (1998) emphasises that the use of the aorist imperative in the verb δός [give] and others in Matthew 6:9–13 implies a succinct command where the action is viewed as a whole, without considering the progression or frequency of that action.

Thus, to determine whether a text represents an imperative of request, context is crucial, particularly the difference in status between the requester and the individual being requested. In this case, the believer (requester) is lower than God (the individual being requested) (Mathewson & Emig 2016). Therefore, the claim by Purnomo and colleagues that Matthew 6:9–13 is a prayer of thanksgiving rather than a prayer of request, based on the use of aorist, cannot be scientifically supported.

An interesting aspect of the use of the aorist imperative in the seven verbs of the Lord's Prayer is revealed by

Merkle and Plummer. They explain that the context of prayer indicates that the imperative can function as a request from the lower to the higher. Merkle and Plummer (2020) also pose an important question regarding the aorist form:

Are we praying for something that has been predetermined in the past by God's sovereign will? The answer is no. Although in the indicative form, the aorist tense suggests past time, about 15 percent of aorist indicative forms do not refer to past time. Another question arises: Are all these imperatives in the aorist form because this model prayer takes a comprehensive view? In this case, the aorist imperative might present the action in a perfective aspect – not focusing on the beginning or end of the action, but presenting the requested activity as a whole. (p. 138)

Merkle and Plummer also remind us that in the strong stylistic patterns of Koine Greek, imperatives in prayer, both Christian and pagan, almost always use the aorist form. Thus, the literary form determines the tense used, not the other way around. Moulton (2005) affirms that requests to deities generally employ the aorist form because they aim to draw attention to a specific issue rather than binding continuously. This indicates that the verb tense does not determine the literary form of the text; rather, it is the literary form that determines the tense employed. This perspective contrasts with the claims made by Purnomo and colleagues, who assert that the text speaks of a prayer of thanksgiving solely because it uses the aorist tense.

All interpreters agree that Matthew 6:9–13 is a prayer of request, consisting of seven petitions in the imperative form, both related to God ('Hallowed be Your name', 'Your kingdom come', 'Your will be done') and to humans ('Give us this day our daily bread', 'Forgive us our debts', 'Do not lead us into temptation', 'Deliver us from evil') (Carson 1984; Evans 2012; Hagner 1993; Keener 1999; Turner 2008; and others).

There is strong evidence in the context that indicates why Matthew 6:9–13 should be understood as a prayer of request. In verses 5–7, Jesus discusses how hypocrites and those who do not know God pray. Hypocrites pray in public, while those who do not know God pray with much repetition, thinking this will cause their prayers to be answered. The use of the word 'answered' in this text emphasises that the prayer Jesus speaks of is a prayer of request. Jesus then forbids his disciples from praying like that, for the Father knows their needs before they ask him (v. 8). The use of the word 'ask' in this text further reinforces that the prayer being discussed is a prayer of request. Thus, in verses 9–13, Jesus teaches his disciples the correct way to pray to God, contrasting it with the way hypocrites and those who do not know God pray (Davies 2009). This becomes even clearer in the context of Luke 11:1–13, where Jesus describes God as a Father who is more generous than a friend and earthly father, always ready to give what his disciples ask.

### A comparison of aorist in John 3:16

In an effort to substantiate their thesis, Purnomo and colleagues reference the term *εδωκεν* (translated as 'given') in

John 3:16. They note that the verb form *εδωκεν* in this text is in the aorist tense, akin to the verb *δός* (translated as 'give') found in Matthew 6:11. Both share the same root form, *δίδωμι* [to give]. Consequently, they argue that because the term *εδωκεν* in John 3:16 is understood as an action that has already occurred, the verb *δός* in Matthew 6:11 should similarly be interpreted as a completed action, given their similarities in tense and root.

However, what Purnomo and his colleagues overlook is the fundamental distinction between the verbs *εδωκεν* and *δός* in terms of mood. The verb *εδωκεν* is in the indicative aorist, whereas *δός* is in the imperative aorist. Moreover, the contexts of these verb usages differ significantly; the context of *δός* is situated within a prayer framework, while the context of *εδωκεν* is not. As Wallace (1996) elucidates, 'time is absolute in the indicative, relative in the participle, and nonexistent in the other moods'. A similar assertion is made by Von Sienbenthal (2019), who states that as a non-indicative form, the imperative lacks any intrinsic notion of 'time'. The choice between aorist, present or perfect tense is more closely related to considerations of the aspect of the action expressed.

Thus, the distinction in meaning between the aorist tense in the indicative and imperative moods becomes strikingly clear. Therefore, it is erroneous for Purnomo and his colleagues to utilise the verb *εδωκεν* in John 3:16 as a foundation for claiming that the aorist form of the imperative in Matthew 6:9–13 should be interpreted as a 'past tense'. Their argument neglects crucial aspects of linguistic structure and the broader theological context, leading to an invalid conclusion.

### Aorist subjunctive in Matthew 6:13

In Matthew 6:13, there is a petition expressed through the phrase *μη εισενεγκης* (translated as 'do not lead us'), where *εισενεγκης* is the aorist subjunctive form of the verb meaning 'to lead'. The use of the subjunctive in this context serves as a prohibition, reflecting a negative command (Wallace 1996). The tense in the subjunctive, much like the imperative mood, does not indicate the 'time' of the action, but rather emphasises the type or aspect of the action (Hewett 2009). In other words, the phrase *μη εισενεγκης* carries a negative request that expresses a desire for us not to be led into temptation.

Through this use of the aorist subjunctive, the text underscores the importance of protection from temptation, not merely indicating a time frame, but highlighting the nature of the request, which implies a longing to avoid perilous situations. This demonstrates the theological depth in Jesus' teaching regarding the disciples' dependence on God in facing life's challenges.

### Forms of thanksgiving in Matthew and Luke

Purnomo and his colleagues argue that the prayer recorded in Matthew 6:9–13 is a prayer of thanksgiving rather than a



petition, based on the use of the aorist tense. However, if we examine examples of prayers of thanksgiving presented by Matthew and Luke, such as those found in Matthew 11:25–26 and Luke 10:21, we encounter a different pattern. In both of these examples, the prayer of thanksgiving begins with the present indicative verb ἐξομολογούμαι [I give thanks], followed by the conjunction ‘because’ [ὅτι] and an aorist indicative verb (for instance, ἀπέκρυσας or ἔκρυσας, along with ἀπεκάλυψας), which serves as the reason for giving thanks.

This pattern is not evident in Matthew 6:9–13. There is no use of a form resembling this structure for a prayer of thanksgiving. Therefore, the text cannot be classified as a prayer of thanksgiving. Consequently, to strengthen their argument, Purnomo and his colleagues bear the burden of proof to demonstrate other examples of prayers of thanksgiving in the Bible that utilise aorist imperative and aorist subjunctive forms. This approach would provide a broader context for understanding the variations and uses of prayer forms within the biblical tradition.

### The verb προσεύχομαι (Mt 6:9)

Purnomo and his colleagues, in their research, argue that the Lord’s Prayer is a prayer of thanksgiving, based on the use of the verb προσεύχομαι, which they claim can refer to thanksgiving. They contend that if the prayer were a petition, the verb that should be used is δέομαι, which more specifically describes the act of requesting (Purnomo et al. 2004:4–5).

However, according to authoritative sources such as Bauer-Danker-Arndt-Gingrich (BDAG), προσεύχομαι is defined as ‘to ask a deity’ or ‘to pray’, while δέομαι is described as ‘to request something urgently’, ‘to beseech’, or ‘to ask’. A similar definition is found in the Louw and Nida Lexicon (1988, 1989), where προσεύχομαι is interpreted as ‘to speak to God’, ‘to beseech God’, ‘to ask of God’, or ‘to pray’. In contrast, δέομαι refers to the action of ‘urgently requesting, with implications of pressing need’, translated as ‘to beseech’ or ‘to implore’. The fundamental difference between the two terms lies in their nuanced usage: προσεύχομαι is a technical term within a religious context that refers to the act of speaking to God to seek his help or assistance, often in the form of prayer or supplication. On the other hand, δέομαι is more frequently employed in contexts of urgent pleas for specific needs (Laia, Laia & Wibowo 2020). Nevertheless, both terms contain elements of petition.

The use of προσεύχομαι in the Gospel of Matthew supports the interpretation that this term refers to prayers of supplication to God. For instance, Jesus instructs his disciples to pray for those who persecute them (5:44). It is evident that this context cannot be interpreted as a call for the disciples to give thanks for the persecution they endure; rather, they are commanded to seek blessings for their persecutors. In Matthew 24:20, Jesus also instructs his disciples to pray that their flight does not occur in winter or on the Sabbath, and in Matthew 26:41, that they do not fall into temptation.

Furthermore, in Matthew 26:36–40, Jesus himself employs the term προσεύχομαι in his prayer at Gethsemane, pleading for the cup of suffering to pass from him.

Therefore, Purnomo and his colleagues’ claim that προσεύχομαι in Matthew 6:9 should be understood as a prayer of thanksgiving appears to be an interpretation that is inconsistent with the context and original meaning of the term in the Gospel of Matthew. This claim can be seen as an inadequate attempt to interpret the text, adding elements that were not intended by the author of the Gospel.

### Evaluation of the research methodology of Purnomo and colleagues

The research title *The Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13: Reconstructing Based on Byzantine Text* clearly indicates the study’s aim, which is to conclude that the text is a prayer of thanksgiving rather than a petition, through reconstruction based on the Byzantine text. However, an analysis of this research reveals that there is no process of reconstruction outlined in the proposed methodology. Furthermore, it is important to note that there are no significant variant differences between Matthew 6:9–13 in the Byzantine text and other texts, such as UBS 5 (Aland et al. 2014). Thus, the attempt to reconstruct the text based on the Byzantine text is unnecessary.

Additionally, Purnomo and colleagues claim that their research employs the exegesis method developed by John D. Grassmick (1976), which includes nine steps: contextual, grammatical, lexical, theological, exegetical, historical, literary (genre), structural, and textual analysis. However, it is unfortunate that the focus of this study is limited solely to grammatical analysis, which renders the conclusions drawn less comprehensive. The core issue is that Grassmick’s (1976:9) exegesis method is not designed to perform text reconstruction; rather, it is intended to uncover the meaning of a text according to the author’s original intent. Therefore, when Purnomo and colleagues attempt to use Grassmick’s exegesis method to reconstruct Matthew 6:9–13 based on the Byzantine text, this is inconsistent with the fundamental principles of that method.

In other words, this research faces significant methodological challenges, leading to conclusions that cannot be scientifically defended. A more thorough evaluation of various aspects within exegetical studies is necessary to provide a more accurate understanding of the text being analysed.

### Evaluation of the literature used

The literature review conducted by Purnomo and colleagues, particularly regarding the analysis of the meaning of ‘aorist’ in New Testament Greek, appears limited to a basic understanding of the aorist tense related to ‘time’, specifically indicating ‘an action that has occurred in the past’. While this statement is correct in the context of using the aorist tense in the indicative mood, it should be noted that the use of the aorist in non-indicative moods, such as the imperative, does

not emphasise 'past time', but rather the 'aspect' of the action in question, as previously explained.

This is affirmed by several scholars whom they cite, such as Binnick (1991), Burton (1898), Weymouth (1891), Robertson (1919), Moulton (2005), and Knoch (n.d.). Although the grammatical work of Binnick (1991) referenced is an analysis of secular Greek, he clearly states that in Greek, the use of tenses (present, aorist, perfect) in non-indicative moods does not relate to 'time', but more to the aspect of the action. In this context, the tense in non-indicative moods tends to emphasise aspect rather than 'time'.

Burton (1898) acknowledges that the primary function of tenses in Greek is not to indicate time, but to describe progress. In this regard, the function of 'time' applies only to the indicative mood, while the function of 'progress' applies to all non-indicative moods. For example, Burton uses the verb δὸς [give] in Matthew 6:11 and does not translate it as 'has been given', but rather as a petition 'give'.

Robertson (1919) also aligns with Moulton, stating that the essential character of the aorist action in non-indicative moods is the absence of a time element. The aorist indicates a punctiliar aspect, while the present indicates a durative aspect. Moulton emphasises that the use of the aorist in the imperative highlights the punctiliar or constative aspect, as seen in the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9–13). Knoch explicitly states in his article that the aorist tense in the imperative mood does not indicate 'past time'.

This evaluation shows that all the scholars cited by Purnomo and colleagues affirm that the aorist tense in the imperative is unrelated to 'past time', but rather pertains to the 'aspect' of the action. Therefore, there is an impression that there is an attempt to misuse the works of the scholars they have cited, which could mislead readers in understanding the use of the aorist in the relevant context.

### Evaluation of the theology of the Lord's Prayer

The theology developed by Purnomo and colleagues through their study of Matthew 6:9–13 includes several main points: that the Kingdom of God has come, God has provided daily bread, God has forgiven sins, and God does not lead believers into temptation, but has delivered his people from evil. This theological conclusion arises from their claim that the aorist tense in the imperative and subjunctive moods of the seven verbs in the text emphasises 'past time'. However, prior literature indicates that this claim cannot be scientifically substantiated.

Consequently, the theology proposed by Purnomo and colleagues can be deemed inconsistent. The text functions as a prayer of petition, implying that all requests made reflect a situation that has not yet been realised from the perspective of the petitioner. Therefore, the theology they propose cannot be accurately constructed from the Lord's Prayer. Conversely, their theological basis might be found in other texts.

For example, their claim that God's forgiveness has been realised through the death of Christ on the cross, and that believers are required to forgive others in response to the forgiveness they have received from God, can be justified in the context of other texts. However, this claim cannot be substantiated within Matthew 6:12 and 14 for several reasons: (1) the forgiveness mentioned in the text refers to forgiveness for daily transgressions, not the forgiveness received by believers at the time of Jesus' death on the cross (cf. 1 John 1:9); (2) the forgiveness in verse 12 is a petition, thus implying something not yet received; (3) the use of the future indicative mood in the verb ἀφήσει [will forgive] emphasises that the act of forgiveness occurs in the future, contingent upon the fulfilment of the condition ('if you forgive the sins of others'); (4) the teaching of the Lord's Prayer occurred before Jesus died on the cross; therefore, God's forgiveness through Christ's crucifixion had not yet happened. Consequently, Purnomo and colleagues' claim that God's forgiveness has occurred is a deliberate misrepresentation.

In the context of the question of whether the Kingdom of God has come at this time (Mt 6:10), there is agreement among scholars, such as Hagner (1993) and Osborne (2010), that the kingdom in question has indeed begun with the coming of the gospel. However, the petition in the prayer reflects a hope for the full arrival of the kingdom at the end of time (see 1 Cor. 16:22; Rv 22:20). Conversely, Morris (1992) argues that the Kingdom of God refers to eschatology that will come in the future. Thus, theologically, it can be concluded that the kingdom has not yet been fully realised, which sharply contrasts with Purnomo and colleagues' assertion that the kingdom has already arrived.

### Defence of the Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia

According to Purnomo and colleagues, the LAI has misinterpreted the term 'Your Father', suggesting it should be in the plural form as 'your fathers' and that the phrase 'in heaven' should be translated as 'the heavenly one'. In the Greek phrase ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν, the word ὑμῶν ['you'] is indeed in the plural form, while ὁ πατήρ is singular. Therefore, LAI is correct in translating this phrase as 'Bapa-mu' [Your Father].

However, it is important to note that in the Indonesian language, there is no second-person plural pronoun; thus, the translation 'mu' is generally understood as singular. In this context, the meaning of 'plural' must be recognised to accurately grasp the intent of the original text. Conversely, the translation proposed by Purnomo and colleagues as 'your fathers' [bapa-bapamu] is grammatically incorrect, because ὁ πατήρ in this text is singular. Theologically, this translation implies the existence of multiple gods who can forgive believers, which contradicts the understanding of monotheism in Christianity.

Furthermore, the term ὁ οὐράνιος is an attributive adjective (Mounce 2019) that can be translated as 'yang surgawi' [the heavenly one], meaning the Father who is in heaven (Turner 2008). Lexically, the word οὐράνιος can mean 'of

heaven', 'coming from or residing in heaven', or 'heavenly' (ed. Danker 2000). This understanding supports the LAI translation, which accurately retains the original meaning of the text while reflecting God's nature as the Heavenly Father.

## Conclusion

This research has explored the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13 with a critical approach to the methodology, literature and theology developed by Purnomo and colleagues. The analysis results show that their claims regarding the aorist tense in the imperative and subjunctive moods cannot be scientifically justified, as their interpretation emphasising 'past time' contradicts the views of Greek language experts. Instead, this tense is more relevant when viewed in terms of the aspect of the action in question.

The theology produced by this research also faces challenges, particularly regarding the understanding of the kingdom of God, the forgiveness of sins, and protection from temptation. This research emphasises that the claim about the presence of the kingdom of God at this time needs to be reassessed, considering the eschatological perspectives of various scholars that indicate the kingdom has not yet fully come.

Furthermore, the evaluation of the LAI translation shows that the translations 'Bapa-mu' [Your Father] and 'di surga' [in heaven] are consistent with the context of the Greek language and maintain the essence of monotheism in Christianity. The alternative translations proposed by Purnomo and colleagues have the potential to mislead deeper theological understanding.

In conclusion, this study emphasises the importance of a comprehensive understanding of the linguistic, theological and historical aspects in biblical exegesis. Through a more critical and holistic approach, it is hoped that a more accurate and profound interpretation of biblical texts, which significantly impact the faith life of Christians, can be achieved.

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## Authors' contributions

H.Z.L. and S.B. contributed equally to the conceptualization, methodology design, data collection, analysis, and revising

of the manuscript. H.Z.L. and S.B. also drafted and reviewed the final version of the manuscript.

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## Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analysed in this study.

## Disclaimer

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