

John Chapter 17

Although (Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4), have become known popularly as the “Lord’s Prayer,” that prayer was actually a prayer taught to the disciples by Jesus as a pattern for their prayers.

The prayer recorded here is truly the Lord’s Prayer, exhibiting the face to face communion the Son had with the Father. Very little is recorded of the content of Jesus’ frequent prayers to the Father, so this prayer reveals some of the precious content of the Son’s communion and intercession with Him.

This chapter is a transitional chapter, marking the end of Jesus’ earthly ministry and the beginning of His intercessory ministry for believers (Hebrews 7:25). In many respects, the prayer is a summary of John’s entire gospel. Its principal themes include:

1. Jesus’ obedience to His father;
2. The glorification of His Father through His death and exaltation;
3. The revelation of God in Jesus Christ;
4. The choosing of the disciples out of the world;
5. Their mission to the world;
6. Their unity modeled on the unity of the Father and Son;
7. The believer’s final destiny in the presence of the Father and Son.

The chapter is divided into three parts

1. Jesus’ prayer for Himself (verses 1-5);
2. Jesus’ prayer for the apostles (verses 6-19);
3. Jesus’ prayer for all New Testament believers who will form the church (verses 20-26).

John 17:1 "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:"

The time of Jesus’ death had come. The very event that would glorify the Son was His death. By it, He has received the adoration, worship and love of millions whose sins He bore. He accepted this path to glory, knowing that by it He would be exalted to the Father.

The goal is that the Father may be glorified for His redemptive plan in the Son. So He sought by His own glory the glory of His father (13:31-32).

This speaking directly to the Father was partially for the benefit of Jesus’ followers. This looking toward heaven tells these disciples of the home of the Father. This glory of Jesus would appear to be anything but glory.

This victory that Jesus wins here is victory over the flesh, as well as victory over Satan and death.

John 17:2 “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

This is a reference to God’s choosing of those who will come to Christ. The biblical doctrine of election or predestination is presented throughout the New Testament.

We read in a previous lesson how Jesus is ruler over everything. Jesus is creator God, as we read in chapter one of John. It says all things were made by Him. The Creator had dominion over His creation. Our flesh was made from the dust of the earth by creator God.

The life we experience is the result of the breath of life breathed into us by God. We are a free agent. We can refuse eternal life. Jesus purchased eternal life for all of mankind. Those who accept it will have eternal life with Him. We are His workmanship.

John 17:3 “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Eternal life is more than an endless existence. It is a personal relationship with God.

Those who refuse to know Jesus as Savior and Lord shall experience death, and not life. If we recognize Jesus as Savior and Lord, we have eternal life. Jesus is the Way, Truth, and Life. No man comes to the Father except by Him (John 14:6).

John 17:4 “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.”

“I have finished” means “I have made perfect or completed.” This verb is in the active voice, indicating Christ had finished His active ministry (4:34). He now assumes a passive role. (In 19:30), “It is finished”, the passive voice suggests that He has by then finished His passive ministry as well.

Through the miracles Jesus did and the messages He brought, He brought glory to the Father. He said He had done the works of the Father. He also said, if they had seen Him they had seen the Father. Jesus brought the good news of the gospel to the earth.

Jesus brought salvation through faith, and not works. His teaching was exactly as He and the Father wished. His miracles caused many to believe on the Father and the Son. The cross would be the final work. Jesus hung on the cross six hours (6 hours - time of work). The work was completed and the rest would begin.

Jesus even says “It is finished”.

John 17:5 “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”

The celestial glory that Jesus had from the beginning was temporarily hidden (veiled), during His earthly life. At the ascension of Christ, Jesus was both glorified and transfigured.

It is interesting to contrast the post-resurrection appearances of Christ with the post-ascension revelations. In the former, Christ often concealed His glory to the point that He was not recognized, such as by the disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24:16; 31), or by Mary Magdalene who thought He was the gardener (20:14).

The post-ascension revelations involve His radiant appearance. The difference between John’s meeting with Christ (in John 21), and in (Revelation 1), was that of seeing the Resurrection body, not glorified, and of later seeing the transformed and celestial body glorified.

For the Creator of the world to be housed in a body of flesh, had to be a terrible come-down. This had all been planned from the beginning to restore fallen man to fellowship with the Father. The first flesh man (Adam), had failed. This is why it was necessary for Jesus to take on the form of flesh.

The second Adam (Jesus), would restore mankind to full fellowship with God.

1 Corinthians 15:22 “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

1 Corinthians 15:45 “And so it is written. The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”

John 3:6 “That which is born of flesh is flesh: and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

The glory of the Father is in the Son. The Son will return to His original glory in heaven, and we will join Him there.

Someday Christians will also be glorified together with Christ (Romans 8:17).

Verses 6-10 “thine they were”. This phrase sums up all of Jesus’ ministry, including the cross that was just hours away. Again, the Son emphasized that those who believed in Him were given by the Father. “They are thine” (verse 9), is a potent assertion that before conversion, they belonged to God (6:37).

That is true because of God’s election. They were chosen before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4), when their names were written in the Lamb’s book of life (Rev. 17:8 and Acts 18:10), where God says He has many people in Corinth who belong to Him but are not yet saved.

Acts 18:10 – “For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.”

Note: This is an opportune time as a teachable moment to show an example of the “predestination” of God’s elect. God had appointed many people in Corinth for salvation, who had not yet heard the gospel (13:48, Romans 10:13-15). The effect of Paul’s preaching would be to bring the elect to faith (Titus 1:1).

John 17:6 “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word.”

To manifest is to make known or real. Jesus has made the Father real to the people. He has stopped them from thinking of a bunch of laws and has revealed the personality of God to them. We see in this, that Jesus' followers have been given Him by the Father.

We will see in Revelation, that those who make it to heaven to be with Jesus (the Christians), are sealed with Jesus' name. We are sealed here with that name, Christians (believers in and followers of Christ). God giving these to Christ just means the Spirit of God wooed them and they came and received the gift of life through Christ.

John 17:7 “Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.”

God made all of humanity on the sixth day of creation, so it all belongs to Him. The Christians were given to Jesus Christ when He bought and paid for them with His blood on Calvary.

Christ had brought the gospel down to the people of the earth and had taught them about the Father. The people who came to a saving faith, knew that the Father had sent Him.

John 17:8 “For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.”

The Son of God affirmed the genuine saving faith of His disciples.

This prayer Jesus is praying to the Father here, is more for those listening than Him speaking to the Father. Jesus has spoken true words. The words Jesus had spoken to them were the words of life.

These disciples do believe, and they do believe that Jesus is one with the Father in the Spirit. The spoken and the written Word originate in heaven. Jesus is that Word.

John 17:9 “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.”

The world rejected Jesus. Jesus prays for those who received Him as their Christ (Messiah). This shows a definite separation between the people of God and the people of the world. True Christians are in the world, but we are not of the world.

John 17:10 “And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.”

This is showing the unity of Spirit of the Father and the Son. Human souls belong to the Father and are Christ's, if they choose to live and not die. Jesus is overjoyed at the loyalty of the disciples to Him. They do not uplift their own name, but the name of the Father and the Son.

John 17:11 “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.”

So sure was His death and departure back to the Father that Jesus treated His departure as an already accomplished fact. He prayed here for His disciples because they would have to face the world's temptation and hatred without His immediate presence and protection (15:18-16:4).

Based on the eternal nature of immutable God (“name”), He prayed for the eternal security of those who believed. He prayed that as the Trinity experiences eternal unity, so may believers (see Romans 8:31-39).

Jesus speaks this as if the crucifixion has already taken place. Jesus' speech lets them know that He will not be physically with them much longer. We know that these disciples are not one in the flesh. Jesus is speaking of the Spirit. They must be in one accord in the work that they have been left to do.

Their thoughts and intents must be one, as the Father's and Jesus' Spirit are one. Their intents are the same. Jesus is praying to the Father for the unity of the Spirit in these disciples. Let them operate as a unit and not as individuals.

Jesus perhaps, was saying not to break up in little groups that we today call denominations. We Christians should be one in Christ.

John 17:12 “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”

Jesus protected them and kept them safe from the world as He said in (6:37-40; 44). One illustration of that can be seen (in 18:1-11). Believers are secure forever because they are held by Christ and by God.

The twelve who followed Jesus the closest were still with Him, except for Judas Iscariot who was evil from the beginning. In one of the earlier lessons, John had said that Judas Iscariot was a thief from the beginning.

These disciples had walked closely with Jesus and loved Him. They had seen Him perform many miracles of healing. They had seen Him raise the dead. They had seen Him walk on the water and feed the multitude with five loaves and two fishes. Their love for Him was all wrapped up with their admiration for Him as well.

He had taught them things that He had not revealed to the multitudes. He had cared for them, as the Shepherd cares for His sheep. He had even filled them with power themselves to minister and to heal. These eleven disciples would found the church.

This identifies Judas by pointing to his destiny, i.e., eternal damnation (Matt. 7:13, Acts 8:20; Romans 9:22; Philippians 1:28; 3:19; 1 Tim. 6:9; Heb. 10:39; 2 Peter 2:1; 3:7; Revelation 17:8 and 11). The defection of Judas was not a failure on Jesus' part, but was foreseen and foreordained in Scripture (Psalms 41:9; 109:8; John 13:18).

This son of Satan (Judas Iscariot), was one of the group, so that the Scripture could be fulfilled. Judas' lust for money made him follow the way of the flesh. Judas had his own free will, and chose death over life.

John 17:13 “And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.”

Again I say, this prayer of Jesus for His followers to the Father is in great part for these disciples to hear, and for all believers for all ages to hear. Jesus explains His relationship with the Father in this prayer. He even emphasizes their position with the Father.

In (verse 13), He explains His joy is to be sufficient for them for their stay on earth, until He takes them home to heaven with Him. One of the most vivid messages in this prayer to me, is that Jesus' followers are to walk in the footsteps He left on the earth and to look for their home not made with hands, but the one He has prepared for them in heaven.

He also reminds them in this prayer, that they belong to Him. It is the will of the Father that the Christians belong to Christ.

John Chapter 17 Questions

1. Where did Jesus look when He prayed?
2. What hour was He speaking of?
3. Who would be glorified in this?
4. Who had the Father given Jesus power over?
5. What would Jesus give to those who the Father gave Him?

6. Who made all of humanity and how?
7. What is life eternal in verse 3?
8. What did Jesus say He had finished?
9. How long had Jesus had this glory with the Father?
10. As in Adam, all die in Christ, all shall be _____.
11. That which is born of flesh is _____.
12. Whose name had Jesus manifested?
13. What does manifest mean?
14. Jesus had shown them what?
15. What day of creation was man made?
16. What had Jesus given unto the disciples?
17. The Word Jesus had spoken to them was the Word of _____.
18. Who is the spoken and written Word?
19. Who did Jesus not pray for?
20. What shows the unity of the Spirit of the Father and Son?
21. Jesus prays the Father will keep whom?
22. When Jesus tells the disciples to be one, what is He speaking of?
23. What was Judas Iscariot called in verse 12?
24. Why had Jesus spoken this in the world in verse 13?