

John 17 - The Upper Room Discourse: Jesus' High Priestly Prayer

IV. Upper Room Discourse (John 13:1—17:26)

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John 17

(7) The Lord's Prayer (17:1-26)

This is the true Lord's Prayer (Jesus did not pray in Matt 6). This is the final major prayer of Jesus before His death. In the OT, prayers often accompanied farewell addresses (Jacob, Gen 49; Moses, Deut 32-33). Many commentators will call this chapter Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer" but Jesus has not yet entered into His ministry as High Priest. He doesn't begin to fulfill that role/office until after His ascension. However, this prayer is a *foretaste* of

Jesus' High Priestly ministry because once that began, Jesus began praying for us around the clock (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).

This much is sure: it is the greatest prayer ever prayed on earth and the greatest prayer recorded anywhere in Scripture. [Wiersbe]

(A) Christ prays for Himself (17:1-5)

1 Jesus spoke these things; and raising His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, so that the Son may glorify You,

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1 After Jesus had said this, he looked up to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, so that the Son may glorify you.

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:

— "Jesus spoke these things" - clearly connects this prayer with what Jesus had just been saying earlier

— He stops speaking to the disciples and begins to pray to the Father, for our benefit and theirs

— "...raising His eyes to heaven" - a reference to Jesus' total dependency on God the Father in Heaven (Cf. 11:41; Ps 123:1; Dan 4:34)

— When Jesus carried out His life and ministry, specifically in prayer, He was completely dependent upon God the Father. When He communicated in prayer, He acknowledged His total and complete dependence upon God the Father.

— "...the hour has come" - a phrase used by Jesus numerous times, which refers to His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension (Cf. 2:4; 7:6; 13:1; 16:32)

— Jesus understood clearly that He was living His life on a divine time clock. He understood when His hour would come, and He understood when it was not yet time for His hour to come.

— What is interesting about Jesus is that, although fully God (He did not shed an ounce of His deity during His Incarnation), He recognized the sovereignty of God and also clearly understood the power and necessity of prayer.

— He knew everything would happen according to schedule, down to the most minute detail, yet it did not keep Him from prayer; that knowledge never weakened His resolve to pray

— *So often in Scripture an emphasis on God's sovereignty functions as an incentive to pray, not a disincentive.* [D.A. Carson]

- Unfortunately, many Christians use the sovereignty of God to get themselves out of responsibilities. If God is sovereign and in control, what is the point of praying?
- "...glorify Your Son" - Jesus is saying, I am prepared to step into what I was sent to earth to do: My death, burial, resurrection, and subsequent ascension. And when all is said and done, the Father is glorified.
- Jesus did not accept the impending events fatalistically (as some believers respond in similar situations). Instead, it moved Him to petition the Father that what was coming would result in God's glory.
- God will be glorified throughout the ages for both His role in creation and redemption...God did it all, from start to finish. He created us, then after we went astray, He Himself stepped into history to undo the damage. The end product is the glorification of God.
- "...so that the Son may glorify You" - Jesus prays for Himself, but His ultimate purpose in praying for Himself is that through that, the Father would be glorified (Cf. James 4:3)
- Our prayer life is mainly anthropocentric; Jesus' prayer life was theocentric and doxological

2 just as You gave Him authority over all mankind, so that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life.

2 For you have given him authority over all humanity so that he might give eternal life to all those you gave him.

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

- Even before His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus had already glorified God the Father

— The Father is glorified by the Son by giving Him (Jesus) authority to give eternal life to everyone to whom the Father has given Him. So the Father has given people to the Son, and the Son has given those people eternal life, which in turn glorifies the Father.

— The source of eternal life is Jesus Christ, and He gave eternal life to everyone whom the Father gave to Him

3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

3 This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

3 And this is eternal life: to know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent—Jesus the Messiah.

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

- It is an immutable spiritual law that you cannot get to the Father, you cannot have a relationship with the Father, unless you go through the Son. The Son is the only path to the Father (Cf. 5:23; 14:6).

— Today people think that as long as you're sincere, you've found truth. Determining truth isn't based on facts or evidence, but on whether or not you sincerely believe it. If you sincerely believe something, people call that truth.

— However, you can be sincerely wrong. The 9/11 hijackers were sincere in their beliefs, weren't they? What about the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:28)? They were also sincere. There are many very sincere people on that broad road that leads to destruction (Cf. Matt 7:13).

4 I glorified You on the earth by accomplishing the work which You have given Me to do.

4 I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do.

4 I glorified you on earth by completing the task you gave me to do.

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

- Jesus was in the process of glorifying the Father by completing His earthly mission. He is praying for Himself as He is about to go through with His earthly mission, but He knows in the back of His mind that once He completes the mission, God will be glorified through it.

— Just as Christ had an earthly mission, and by completing it, would bring glory to the Father...what is my earthly mission, am I in the midst of completing it, and when complete, will it bring glory to the Father?

— When we begin to walk with the Lord on a moment-by-moment basis, and we're consistently in the Word and prayer, all of a sudden my myopic little plans seem to drift away and become unimportant and I begin to want what God wants, since my purpose is to glorify Him.

— God wants to glorify Himself through me and my life...

— Jesus told the church at Sardis, which was about to die, that they had not yet completed the tasks that He had for them (Rev 3:2). He urged them to "strengthen the things that remain" so that they could press on fulfilling God's purpose in them, and thus glorify God.

— The church at Sardis mirrors the life of many Christians today...we get saved, then we fill our lives with frivolous, trivial, carnal pursuits, then we get to the end of our existence and the Lord says, I have not found your deeds to be complete in the sight of my God. How tragic!

— How different was Christ's life from that? He says, I have glorified You by accomplishing the work which You gave Me to do. If I can't say that I'm accomplishing His work in my life, if I can't say that the Lord is getting His way in my life, then what I'm doing other than God's work is a hindrance to my very existence, which is to accomplish God's work and thus bring glory to Him.

— Paul looked back, at the end of his life, with no regrets (2 Tim 4:7). The church of Sardis could not say that. Can I say that? Jesus did, and consequently He could enter eternity and look back and understand that He accomplished the work that Father gave to Him.

5 And now You, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world existed.

5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

5 "So now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world existed.

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 final petition for Himself in this prayer is for the Father to restore Him to His pre-incarnate glory, which He had from before the foundation of the world

— Before the plan to redeem mankind from the first Adam was set to begin, He enjoyed perfect communication and fellowship with God the Father. Following His ascension, Jesus is simply praying for a return to that same position.

Jesus prayed for His disciples before He chose them (Luke 6:12), during His ministry (John 6:15), at the end of His ministry (Luke 22:32), here (John 17:6-19), and later in heaven (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).

	David/Saul	Jesus/Satan
Anointed	David (1 Sam 16:13)	Jesus-Resurrection & Ascension (Ps 2:7; 110:1)
Now ruling	Saul (1 Sam 16:14)	Satan (Luke 4:5-7)
Faith	David (1 Sam 16:7)	Jesus (Heb 11:6)
Minority	David's men (2 Sam 23:8-39)	Narrow road (Matt 7:14)
Sight	Saul (1 Sam 9:2)	Satan (2 Cor 4:18; 1 John 2:15-17)
Majority	Israel	Broad road (Matt. 7:13)

(B) Christ prays for His disciples (17:6-19)

Jesus now transitions in His prayer to begin praying for His disciples. "The length of this section of the prayer suggests that Jesus had greater concern for His disciples welfare than His own" [Constable]. What topics dominate in my prayer life...is it concern and petitions for myself, or is it God's priorities and intercession for others? We have a tendency to be overly self-seeking in our prayer life, not that praying for ourselves is wrong, but it is often disproportionate when compared to our petitions for God's priorities and for others.

Jesus prayed for His disciples before choosing them (Luke 6:12); during His ministry He prayed for His disciples (John 6:15), at the end of His ministry (Luke 22:32; here), and later He continues to pray for them in heaven from the Father's right hand (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25). [Ed Bloom, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*].

(a) He has revealed the Father to them (17:6-7)

6 "I have revealed Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have followed Your word.

6 "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

6 I have made your name known to these men whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

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.

- "I have revealed Your name" - notice that Jesus did not pursue His own ministry goals to His disciples; He simply revealed the Father's name to them (Cf. Is 52:6). Jesus simply saw Himself as a channel of communication between God the Father and the disciples.
- We are to function in much the same way: we carry the baton of God's Word, the gospel. We did not create the baton, it was simply handed to us by someone else, and now as we run the race of life, we're simply to pass that baton along to others.
- The "name" of God denotes the totality of who He is. Jesus' mission was to reveal the name of God, the totality of who He is, to the disciples and to the world.
- The only way a person can gain knowledge and understanding of who God is is through the Son, Jesus Christ (Cf. 14:6)
- "...the men whom You gave Me" - this is how Jesus viewed His disciples...as gifts from God
- Pastors or others who run ministries, especially large successful ministries, often are blind to the fact that the only reason they have that ministry, and that ministry has grown, is because God gave them that ministry and God grew that ministry, often in spite of them.
- "...out of the world" - this is a pattern throughout Scripture: before God uses someone in any significant way, He first separates them from the world
- He does not take them out of the world in a physical sense (obviously), but He separates them in the sense that their thinking is no longer worldly. This is the process of sanctification (being set apart).
- The first example of God doing this was with Abram, who was an idolater living in Ur of the Chaldeans. God told Abram to walk by faith and go to a place that God would show him. Once he did that, God gave him certain promises and in Gen 15 told him that he would be the father of a covenant with a new race of people.

- 7 Now they have come to know that everything which You have given Me is from You;
- 7 Now they have come to know that everything You have given Me is from You;
- 7 Now they realize that everything you gave me comes from you,
- 7 Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee.

- Once Jesus' revealed the Father to them, whom God gave to Him, they responded with justification...they believed
- Once they responded with justification, and then began to understand the deeper picture of God, He began to reveal Himself in a deeper more meaningful way. They began to understand spiritual truths and spiritual realities.

(b) He has given the Father's words to them (17:8)

- 8 for the **words** which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received **them** and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they **believed** that You sent Me.

8 for the words which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me.

8 because the words that you gave me I passed on to them. They have received them and know for sure that I came from you. They have believed that you sent me.

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.

— "...words" - *rhēma*, the spoken word of God; during Jesus' ministry, He did not write any books. We have no books of the Bible written directly by Jesus Himself. The Gospels record His ministry and His teachings, but Jesus did not write them specifically.

— Jesus simply gave the *rēma*, the spoken word of God, to these disciples. When Jesus spoke, the Father spoke.

— "...believed" - *pistis*, to rely upon, depend upon, to trust

— Notice "words" and "believed"...unless there is a teaching of the Word of God, a proclamation of divine truth, faith can never manifest itself (Cf. Rom 10:17)

— God uses the teaching and proclamation of His truth to create a climate of faith whereby men and women can respond in confidence to what God has said. The reason why these 11 disciples believed is because Jesus gave them the Word of God the Father. Without the proclamation of divine truth, the Word of God, a person cannot come to Christ in salvation (Cf. 2 Tim 3:15; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23).

— Without the Word of God being faithfully read and taught, a faith response is an impossibility. This is why a systematic teaching of God's Word in the church is so critical, and is the great tragedy when that systematic teaching is abandoned in the church. If the Word of God is not on the menu, a climate of faith will simply not happen.

(c) He has prayed for them (17:9-10)

9 I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but on the behalf of those whom You have given Me, because they are Yours;

9 I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours;

9 "I am asking on their behalf. I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those you gave me, because they are yours.

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

— Jesus is praying for His disciples, not for the world at large. Jesus does not spend time praying for the world because the world system, while its days are numbered, is under the power and control of Satan.

- Jesus here acknowledges that the only reason He has a ministry is because it was entrusted to Him by God the Father
- He did not view the disciples as His own, but as those whom the Father entrusted Him
- Is this how I view my ministry? A ministry may be doing great things, but is the perspective right? Do the ministry leaders view their ministry as God's ministry, that He has entrusted to them?

10 and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.

10 and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.

10 All that is mine is yours, and what is yours is mine, and I have been glorified through them.

10 And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

- "...all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine" - Jesus acknowledges that what belongs to the Son also belongs to the Father, and what belongs to the Father equally belongs to the Son

— These are all indirect claims that Jesus keeps making about His equality with the Father

- "...I have been glorified in them" - the first thing we do to glorify God and fulfill our doxological purpose is to believe in His Son, to trust in the words of Jesus Christ. Not trusting in the provision of Jesus Christ is a very serious thing...not only does it place us under the judgment of God, but it causes someone to miss out on the very purpose of their existence.

— It glorifies Christ by trusting in Him because we are trusting in His character and in His power. We are trusting in the fact that He has the ability to do what He says He will do (keep His promises) and the character that He will not lie to us.

— Not trusting in Christ is an attack on His character...it's like you take your child or grandchild to the mall, and they ask you, dad/grandpa, you're not going to leave me here at the mall by myself, are you? That question would be an attack on your character. Well of course I'm not going to leave you at the mall by yourself, what kind of dad/grandpa do you think I am?

— When we don't trust in Jesus Christ, we are attacking His character in the same way...we're saying, Jesus, I really don't think you have the ability to do what you said You were going to do. Your power is somehow lacking. Or it's saying, Jesus, I don't think you have the character or the integrity to do what You said You were going to do.

Consequently, we end up stealing or depriving God of the glory that belongs to Him.

(d) He asks the Father to unify them (17:11)

11 I am no longer going to be in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I am coming to You. Holy Father, **keep them in Your name**, *the name* which You have given Me, so that **they may be one just as We are**.

11 I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, *the name* which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are.

11 I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by your Name, the Name that you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

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.

- Jesus is leaving to return to heaven, but the disciples will remain in the hostile, Satanically-energized world system, so Jesus begins to pray to the Father for them, to keep them in the Father's name and for their unity
- "...keep them in Your name" - there's a lot of debate about what Jesus is praying for here, but it can be summed up as praying that the Father would keep them loyal to You and Your name in the world.
- Jesus is praying that the disciples would maintain fidelity and loyalty to God in every way, while they are stuck here in a foreign land, under a system diametrically opposed to God.
- "...they may be one" - Jesus also prays that the disciples might be unified in purpose and mission once He ascends back to heaven
- There is a direct correlation between holiness and unity, and between unholiness and disunity. If you study church splits, you won't find doctrinal divisions (which would be a good reason for disunity/church split), what you'll find as the root cause most of the time is that people elevate their personal preferences to the level of doctrinal truth. In reality, you search the Scriptures and find it's not a biblical truth at all, but simply a personal preference that they have. Because that preference is not being met, people get upset, put together a group, and they leave.
- People love to mask their complaint as some great theological division, but in reality it's nothing more than they are offended and hurt that their personal preferences are not being acknowledged and met by the church. Instead of walking by the Spirit, they have enthroned their flesh and their priority is what they want, not God's will.
- Notice in this prayer that every time Jesus mentions the topic of unity, it is always connected to truth. You can't have unity for the sake of unity...unity comes from belief and trust in the same truth. Truth, by definition, causes division. The Bible is a divisive book. Jesus talked all about how people who believe in Him will bring division to their very own

households. This doesn't imply in any way, shape or form that we are to be intentionally divisive or mean-spirited at all, but we have to grow and mature to a point that we understand that if we are committed to the Word of God, there will be a natural division that occurs between people.

- "...just as" - *kathōs*, believers cannot precisely duplicate the oneness/unity of the Godhead, but can imitate it in certain respects

(e) He has kept them safe (17:12)

12 While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name, which You have given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished **except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.**

12 While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.

12 While I was with them, I protected them by the authority that you gave me. I guarded them, and not one of them became lost except the one who was destined for destruction, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

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 is acknowledging what He has done with His 11 disciples...notice the action is always with Jesus, not with the disciples..."I was keeping them" and "I guarded them"...it is always Jesus doing the work.

— Notice that it wasn't the disciples hanging onto the Lord, it was the Lord hanging onto the disciples. All of the verbs in this verse refer to either what God the Father was doing, or what Jesus Christ was doing. There is no mention of anything that the disciples were doing or had to do in order to be "kept" or "guarded" by Jesus.

— Our security as believers does not come from what we do, it comes from what the Father and the Son do. And Jesus is obviously very good at guarding and keeping believers because during His ministry, not a single one of the disciples was lost. But this doctrine has become lost or muddled in the teaching of many churches today under the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints.

— This doctrine teaches that if a "believer" is not manifesting fruit in their lives, they are not really a "believer." The focus of this doctrine may be well-intentioned (or not), but the focus of that doctrine is on man, not God. It's on what man does, not what God has done. Not to mention, it's completely unbiblical. The Bible clearly places the onus and responsibility of our security as believers on the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, not on us.

- If there was anyone among the disciples who understood the concept of the *preservation* of the saints instead of the *perseverance* of the saints, it was Peter. He was in the Upper Room and heard this prayer of Christ. He later wrote that believers "are protected by the power of God through faith" (1 Peter 1:5).
 - In other words, a person has exercised initial faith in the Lord and His provision, then Peter is very clear that for his eternal destiny, it was God Himself and God's power that was protecting and guarding that believer. Peter puts the responsibility for the security of his eternal salvation completely upon God.
 - "...except the son of destruction" - oops, looks like Jesus was 11/12 since Judas perished. Looks like God fumbled Judas. He was able to hold onto the 11, but didn't quite get the job done with Judas.
 - The fact is, the Bible clearly teaches that Judas did not lose his salvation...he was never saved to begin with. John 6:64,71 clearly shows that Jesus knew from the beginning who did not believe in Him and who would eventually betray Him; v71 clarifies that Jesus was referring to Judas.
 - Judas is what we would today call a "cultural Christian"...he followed Jesus, heard His teachings, but always had an ulterior motive. Judas even went out when Jesus sent the disciples to preach the offer of the kingdom to Israel, he was there evangelizing.
 - Jesus called Judas the "son of destruction" because he had nothing to look forward to after death except judgment and retribution (Cf. Matt 26:24). See note: **5 Reasons Why Judas Was Not Saved** in 13:30.
 - The title "son of destruction (perdition)" is only used of one other person in the Bible: the Antichrist (2 Thess 2:3)
 - It's interesting that after Jesus fed Judas the morsel of bread, Satan entered him (Cf. 13:27). Judas was possessed by Satan himself to carry out the act of betrayal against the Son of God. In the same way, the coming Antichrist will come "in accord with the activity of Satan" and perform many signs, wonders and miracles (Cf. 2 Thess 2:9).
 - We are living in a culture that validates truth by experience. If I have a vision, a revelation, a feeling of some sort, then we believe that somehow God must be involved in it. But that is not how you validate or authenticate truth. If you are validating and authenticating truth by some sort of feeling or experience you have, you are a sitting duck for deception.
 - The way we are *always* to validate truth is by its consistency with the Word of God
 - "...so that the Scripture would be fulfilled" - many Christians have this idea that Satan and God are rivals, and that God is sitting in heaven with sweaty palms thinking about His next move to try to get over on Satan. And Satan is doing the same thing in hell. That's not what's happening.

- We have a tendency to elevate Satan with far more power than he actually has. Compared to God, Satan is nothing; compared to the angels, Satan is less powerful. However Satan is more powerful than we are.
- Many things regarding Judas were spelled out in the Scripture in the OT. Here, Jesus is likely referring to Ps 41:9, written 1000 years before Judas lived.

(f) He asks the Father to give them joy (17:13)

13 But now I am coming to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

13 But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

13 "And now I am coming to you, and I say these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.

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

- Jesus now prays that the disciples would have a full measure of "My joy"
- "Joy" in the Bible is different from "happiness"...happiness is based on our circumstances; if things are going well, I like my job, I have money in the bank, my relationships are going fine, then I'm happy. But as soon as things go south, I lose my job, my relationships become rocky, happiness goes away.
- Joy, and particularly the joy of Christ, is the capacity given by God to experience the peace of God despite the fact that our circumstances may be going badly from the human point of view.
- God is not interested in our happiness, He's interested in our joy
- When the disciples and Jesus were in the boat and a sudden storm arose on the Sea of Galilee, the disciples were "happy" until the storm arose, then their happiness left them and they panicked. Jesus had joy, as He was asleep in the back of the boat on a cushion (Cf. Mark 4:38).

(g) He has given them the Father's words resulting in the world's hatred of them (17:14)

14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, because they do not belong to the world, just as I don't belong to the world.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

- The fact that Jesus gave the disciples the words of the Father is not new information; Jesus said the same thing in v8.

— What is new here is the reaction of the world to those words: hatred (Cf. 15:18-20; 2 Tim 3:12)

(h) He asks the Father to protect them (17:15-16)

15 I am not asking You to take them out of the world, but to keep them away from the evil one.

15 I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.

15 I'm not asking you to take them out of the world but to protect them from the evil one.

15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [one].

- Jesus was leaving this world, but He wanted the disciples to remain in the world.

However, while they remained in the world and ministered, Jesus prayed that the Father would protect them from the evil one (Cf. Matt 6:13).

Keep Them from the Evil [One]

Post-tribulationists site v15, specifically the phrase "keep them from the evil [one]" as meaning that Jesus will keep Christians "safe" during the Great Tribulation. The same Greek word combination *tērēoek* is used here, as well as Rev 3:10. They believe "keep them from" implies "protection" not "removal" (rapture) and the word "from" (ek, also translated "out of") implies existence *in* the Tribulation before we can come *out of* it. The identical preposition is used in Rev 7:14: "These are they which came *out of* great tribulation."

To clinch their point they use John 17:15 which uses both words together: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest *keep them from* the evil." They use this verse to show that we are "kept from" while *still in the world*.

In this verse, what is the *object* of "keep from"? Is it the "world"? — No. It is "the evil [one]". We are kept from the evil one! If we were kept from the world we would not have been born. This verse proves nothing about our presence or absence in the world during the Tribulation, because the word "keep" is not used in connection with "the world."

What does it mean to be kept from the evil one? Does this mean we are kept *in* the evil one? Or does it imply existence *in* the evil one and God wants to take us out? God forbid! The believer is so kept that "the evil one does not touch him" (1 John 5:18). To be kept from something means that it will not even touch you! This verse illustrates our meaning beautifully. Just as we are not *in* the evil one, so we will not be *in* the Tribulation.

In the context of John 17:11-16, the idea of "keeping" is related to salvation and the possession of eternal life, not preservation from the moral assaults of Satan. The issue is the keeping of salvation (i.e., the preservation of the saints), not progression in sanctification, which is taken up in 17:17. In the context of 17:15, *tērēo ek* demands the idea of preservation outside the evil one, which makes outside preservation the preferred (most probable) interpretation of Rev 3:10 (see notes on Rev 3:10).

16 **They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.**

16 **They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.**

16 **They don't belong to the world, just as I don't belong to the world.**

16 **They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.**

- Jesus lived in constant conflict with the world around Him, and the disciples will endure the same plight

(i) He asks the Father to sanctify them (17:17-19)

17 **Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.**

17 **Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.**

17 **"Sanctify them by the truth. Your word is truth.**

17 **Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.**

- "Sanctify" - *hagiazō*, separation; to be set apart from something

— This concept of separation from the world prior to service is something that we find throughout the Bible. Abram is a good example: he was an idol worshipper living in Ur of the Chaldeans (Joshua 24:2-3). Other examples include Moses & Apostle Paul.

— Is God at work setting you apart from the world so that He can use you? Have relationships that you once held dear gone south? Have the financial resources that you trusted in gone south? Largely these things can be the hand of God working in your life to separate you to Himself, and gradually transforming you into the image of His Son so that He can begin to work in your life.

- "...the truth" - *a/ētheia*, notice the definite article "the" preceding truth, not just describing truth in general, but a specific truth

— This describes the means by which God separates us or sanctifies us...God separates us to Himself through perpetual or chronic exposure to divine truth. The more we are exposed to truth and the more we respond to that truth, the more progress we make in our sanctification.

— If we are not aware of the truth because we don't access or hear or are taught the truth, then our capacity to be used by God becomes very limited. Before God uses us, He sanctifies us, and to sanctify us He exposes us to divine truth through His Word.

- "...Your word is truth" - truth comes from the Word of God; we find the truth of God in the Word of God
- "word" - *logos*, used many times in John's Gospel to describe Jesus Himself (Cf. 1:1,14)
- The truth of God whereby we are set apart for the work of God is none other than exposure to Jesus Christ Himself
- The *logos* refers to Christ, but it also refers to the 66 books of Scripture that we have today; 27 of those books (the entire NT) had not yet been written at the time Jesus spoke these words. All they had at that time was Hebrew Bible (the OT).
- Gal 6:6 describes the canon of Scripture that includes the NT, using the same word *logos*
- Without exposure to God's Word, a person cannot make any progress whatsoever in the process of sanctification. The Scripture is the tool that God uses to usher us into a phase of separation. It is only from our exposure to God's truth in Scripture that we can ever hope to be separated from the world unto God so that God might use us.
- When we sit under the teaching of the Word of God, the Spirit begins to point out sins in our lives that we need to deal with. The Holy Spirit will at times make us uncomfortable by putting His finger upon certain things in our lives through the Word of God.
- The Holy Spirit uses our personal reading and study of the Word of God, as well as our local church or small group Bible study where (hopefully) the Word of God is taught unfiltered, to make us aware of things in our lives that need to be altered under God's power so that we might be separated from the world and its values and sanctified to Him so that He might use us (Cf. Heb 4:12; Ps 119:9).
- If you are struggling in the area of worldliness God has a remedy: consistent, perpetual exposure to His Word, with a heart to obey it. Not just hearing the Word of God and tucking that knowledge away for a future time, but hearing the Word of God and making a purposeful life change, under the power of the Holy Spirit.
- God never promised to bless a man, bless a method, or bless a movement, but He has promised to bless over and over again is His Word

- So how do we grow as Christians?

1. Cultivate intimacy with the *logos*, Jesus Christ
2. Get into an environment, through your own study habits, BSF, a Bible study, or a church that systematically teaches God's Word verse by verse, where you are perpetually taking in the Word of God (Cf. v8).
3. We have to make the choice to obey God under His power when the Word of God does its work in our lives and our hearts. The Spirit must be at work to convict us, the Son must be at work to cultivate us, and the Word of God must be at work to correct us.

Is 55:10-11:

10 "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth And making it produce and sprout, And providing seed to the sower and bread to the eater;

11 So will My word be which goes out of My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding *in the purpose* for which I sent it.

Jer 23:29: "Is My word not like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer *which* shatters a rock?

With the mind, we learn God's truth through the Word. With the heart, we love God's truth, His Son (Cf. 14:6). With the will, we yield to the Spirit (of truth, Cf. 14:17; 16:13) and live God's truth day by day. It takes all three for a balanced experience of sanctification.

[Wiersbe]

18 Just as You sent Me into the world, I also sent them into the world.

18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

18 Just as you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

18 As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

- Jesus reveals the mission of the disciples: to go out into the world and evangelize, preach the gospel, just as Jesus did in His ministry

— Jesus here gives the reason for the sanctification of the disciples...so they can go out to serve and preach

— God had a huge undertaking for these 11 disciples (Eph 2:20)...they would become, along with the NT prophets, the very foundation of the Church. This is why Jesus is praying for them to be sanctified by the truth of God's Word.

— Why does He require us to be sanctified before He begins to use us? Because the moment we go out into the world and speak the things of God, our lives better be different. If our lives are no different than the pagan world all around us, we have zero credibility. The world will see no difference. We cannot speak prophetically and authoritatively to the culture when we're no different than the culture.

- If our lives are just like those whom we're called to reach, we become like Lot. Am I a lot like Lot?

— In 2 Peter 2:7-8, Lot is called "righteous" 3x. In Genesis, Lot was called to Sodom, but rather than lifting people out of the sin of Sodom, Lot jumped into the pool with them. Lot became just like the environment he was sent into. See note: **Lot's Path to Compromise** in Gen 19:1.

— Lot wanted to speak with authority on eternal things, but no one (not even his own family, Gen 19:14) took him seriously because he violated the biblical principle that first, before usability and fruitfulness, comes sanctification.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

19 For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

19 It is for their sakes that I sanctify myself, so that they, too, may be sanctified by the truth.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

- Jesus again connects sanctification with truth...sanctification cannot happen any other way than through the consistent, perpetual intake, digestion, and application of God's Word

- "...I sanctify Myself" - the only reason that we as Christians can be sanctified at all is because Jesus sanctified Himself. His sanctification is the reason why we can also be sanctified.

— Jesus set Himself apart for God's purpose and His calling. If Jesus had not fully accomplished and completed all He was called to do, there would be nothing for the rest of us: no salvation, no sanctification, and no missionary calling.

(C) Christ prays for His Church (17:20-26)

(a) Transition (17:20)

20 "I am not asking on behalf of these alone, but also for those who believe in Me **through their word,**

20 "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

20 I ask not only on behalf of these men, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their message,

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

- Jesus now broadens His prayer from the 11 disciples exclusively to all who would believe on Him in the future through the disciples

— Jesus was very intentional in His prayer for the 11 disciples because they were the primary ones who would go out and spread the gospel, the first generation after His ascension. Jesus now prays for the second generation, those who would hear the gospel from these 11 and then believe.

- "...through their word" - every Christian today has come to Christ through the words of the disciples, either directly or indirectly
- This is why Jesus prayed for the disciple's sanctification...because if they are not sanctified, if they are not living as they are teaching, their ministry would have no credibility

(b) Request for their unity (17:21-23)

(i) Request for unity (17:21)

21 that they may **all be one**; just as You, Father, **are in Me and I in You**, that they also may be in Us, **so that the world may believe that You sent Me**.

21 that they may all be one; even as You, Father, **are in Me and I in You**, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

21 so that they may all be one. Just as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be one in us, so that the world may believe that you sent me.

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

- "...all" - a reference to the universal church

- "...be one" - many becoming one, a reference to unity within the body of Christ, the church; Jesus prayer was answered in Acts 2 (Pentecost) when the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit began

— Can Christians be divided? Absolutely.

— In Phil 4:2-3, Paul urges Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony. These two women, who were believers (17:3), were arguing over something and it was causing a division/schism in the church.

— The church in Corinth had so much disunity that they began to sue each other (1 Cor 6:7) and had their cases settled before unbelieving judges.

— Paul, in Eph 4:1-6, describes the unity that God wants within His church and how to obtain it. Acts 2:41-47 describes the Christ-centered unity that was present at Pentecost and in the period following.

- This verse has been co-opted by the ecumenical movement today to push unity amongst various religions...Christianity, Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.

— They seek unity at the expense of truth...where do we find "common ground" between these "great religions"? And what inevitably happens is that Christianity becomes watered down, key truths of Scripture are deprioritized or compromised for the sake of unity.

— This is not the type of unity that Jesus is praying for here...

— The ecumenist will always attempt to find "common ground"...that's their code word. So they'll look at the great creeds of Christianity, such as the Nicene Creed or the Apostle's Creed. They'll take those creeds and list 5-6-7 things that we cannot compromise on

(17:irgin birth, deity of Christ, Trinity, etc.), and then go ahead and compromise on everything else.

— What they don't understand is that the creeds of Christianity were in response to heresies within the Church. For example, the Nicene Creed was in response to Arianism, which taught that Jesus was a created being. So there's a clause in the Nicene Creed that says, "Begotten, not made."

— So stick with the hard and fast beliefs of historical Christianity, but compromise away any of the other doctrines of Scripture (the doctrine of the Church, the doctrine of the kingdom, baptism, spiritual gifts, the Rapture, etc.).

— The ecumenical movement constantly quotes v21, but they fail to go back and quote v17 or v19. This is the benefit of verse-by-verse teaching. Words and phrases only mean things based on their context. Satan is the master of grabbing verses out of their context and using them against us (Cf. Gen 3; Luke 4). If a lawyer were to do this with the law they'd be disbarred, but if it's done from the pulpit or a book in the Christian bookstore, it is evidently ok.

— Does v21 in any way, shape or form support the notion that we should water down or compromise truth for the sake of unity? No, not in the context of Jesus' prayer here. Verses 17 and 19 make that conclusion impossible, as well as 1 John 4:1-3; 2 John 7-11.

— Not all unity is from God (Cf. Gen 11:1-7, esp v6)

- "...so that the world may believe that You sent Me" - the world will know that Jesus was sent from the Father when they see true unity amongst Christians on earth, when the schisms and personality conflicts are put away

— Notice that the unity that existed in the early church was never at the expense of truth. This is diametrically opposed to what the ecumenical movement is saying today.

— It will become more and more difficult in the days ahead to take a strong stand on the Word of God. Not only is persecution from the unsaved world heading our way, but maybe even more surprising to some is that persecution from within the so-called body of Christ is coming as well to those who hold to a traditional biblical standard of belief because we will be accused over and over again of creating an atmosphere of disunity within the church.

- So what is Jesus teaching us here in v21? We have schisms, fights and conflicts within the church that are related to our sin nature. These are the conflicts that we need to do away with. We need to get ourselves off the throne and develop more of an attitude of gratitude, more of a servant mentality. Once we do this, the conflicts within the believing church will begin to disintegrate.

This verse is a favorite of promoters of the ecumenical movement. The ecumenical movement seeks to unite the world's Christian churches in one all-embracing church.

However, as the content and context of this verse clarify, Jesus was not speaking about institutional unity but personal unity among genuine believers (Cf. Eph 2:15). He was praying that all true believers would be one in their love for one another, their submission to the authority of Scripture, and their commitment to their mission. Disunity among professing Christians has frustrated Jesus' purpose that the world might believe on Him. Nevertheless, the solution to this problem is not to impose an artificial institutional unity that ignores the basis of true unity. It is to promote love for one another among genuine believers. [Constable]

Thoughtless and absurd is the modern notion that Christ was praying that denominations which exist in this remote time and in a country then unknown might become organically united into one, and therefore it is somehow the duty of all sects to unite and thus to help answer this prayer. As indicated before, this unity is sought at the hand of the Father, indicating that it is a divine undertaking. It is that, and it results in a unity as organic and vital as that between the Father and the Son. This prayer began to be answered on the day of Pentecost when believers were, by the Spirit, baptized into one body, and is constantly answered whenever a soul is saved and thus joined as a number to the body of Christ by the same Spirit. [Chafer]

In other words, to get out there today and work to fulfill this prayer ignores the fact that it has already been answered. This prayer request was answered in Acts 2, and continues to be answered over and over again as each person comes to saving faith in Christ, as God keeps adding person after person to Christ's body, the Church. How foolish, ignorant, and arrogant it is for us today to get out there under human power, under the message of unity, and put this prayer into motion, thinking that God needs our help. And in our own way, in order to help God, we come up with distorted, perverted thinking of who God really is.

The definition of unity is "a joint response to truth."

Tolerance in the area of personal relationships is a virtue, however tolerance when it comes to truth is a travesty. [Unknown]

(ii) Unity based on the Father's knowledge (17:22)

22 The glory which You have given Me I also have given to them, so that they may be one, just as We are one;

22 The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

22 "I have given them the glory that you gave me, so that they may be one, just as we are one.

22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:

- After praying for unity (17:21), Jesus begins to pray for a unity based on the Father's knowledge
 - Notice what Jesus is saying here: the glory goes from the Father to the Son to the Church. What glory is Jesus talking about that goes from the Father, to the Son, then to the Church? Knowledge.
 - This is the spiritual knowledge and relationship that we can have to God the Father. Jesus is speaking of His bringing the full knowledge of God to the disciples [see quote from Thomas Constable below].
 - If glory = knowledge in what Jesus is praying here, then we have another definition of what true unity is: True unity is not at the expense of knowledge, but it's built on the foundation of knowledge.

The revelation of God results in glory for God. When believers understand and believe the revelation of God that Jesus brought, they become partakers of that glory. This is something else that they share in unity with one another, which the Father and the Son also share with one another. [Constable]

(iii) Unity based on Christ in them (17:23)

- 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and You loved them, just as You loved Me.
- 23 I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.
- 23 I am in them, and you are in me. May they be completely one, so that the world may know that you sent me and that you have loved them as you loved me.
- 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.
- Jesus describes the Father in Him and Himself in the disciples
 - Just as the Father is in the Son and the Son is in the disciples, in the same sense we as God's people are in Christ and Christ is in us
 - This is not a new teaching (Cf. 15:2). Each member of the Trinity, Father (Cf. 14:23), Son (Cf. 14:23; 15:2; Col 1:26-27) and Holy Spirit (Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 12:13), indwell the Church Age believer. Paul calls the fact that God lives inside of a believer a "mystery," a truth never before disclosed (Col 1:26-27). God living inside a person is a phenomena never known before in the history of the world. It was never even thought of in the OT, where God indwelt the tabernacle or the temple, behind the veil in the Holy of Holies.
 - When the world gets wind of the fact that God lives inside of believers, they will have the witness/evidence they need to know that Jesus was sent by the Father, and the Father loves them

- When the world figures out that God lives inside of me, once the world sees God in me, they will have the evidence they need to acknowledge that Jesus was sent from the Father, and that God loves them
- Does the world see Christ in me or do they just see another religious person? There are enough artifacts and empty tombs around us that the world doesn't pay attention any more...what they need to see is Christ in me. What the world is dying to see is evidence of God living inside of me. We need to live out this positional truth that we have been given in the age of the Church.
- If my body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, maybe I should treat it differently? Maybe I shouldn't involve it in fleshly activities (1 Cor 6:18-19). Why do we need to tell our sin nature no (Rom 6:12)? The incentive is that the Triune God is living inside of us.

(c) Request for their glory (17:24-26)

(i) Future glory (17:24)

24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

24 Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

24 Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory, which you gave me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

- What is Jesus prayer for the church here? His prayer is that at a point in time in history, the world would see the glory that the Father gave to the Son

— This glory that Jesus had was not something new...Jesus had this glory before the foundation of the world. This means that before the universe existed, the Son enjoyed unbroken and perfect fellowship with God the Father.

— At the Incarnation of Christ, He added humanity to eternally existent deity and became one of us (Cf. 1:14). When that happened, the glory of God was evident in one sense, but in another sense the glory of God was veiled.

— In the Incarnation, we in a sense have a human replica of God the Father in the form of Jesus Christ (Cf. 1:18), so we can see the glory of the Father through the life of the Son. However in another sense, with the Incarnation, the glory of God was veiled by human flesh.

- The moment Jesus completed His earthly work and ascended to heaven to the Father's right hand is the moment when Jesus' glory would return (Cf. v5).
- In His Incarnation, Jesus never gave up deity, He never gave up the attributes of deity, and He never gave up prerogatives of deity. What He did give up/surrender was the independent exercise of those attributes to the Father.
- Jesus' prayer here is that we might experience this same glory with Him. The desire of Christ is that we may see this glory, and one day experience this same glory either at our death or the Rapture, whichever comes first. Jesus is praying here for our glorification.

25 "Righteous Father, although the world has not **known** You, yet I have **known** You; and these have **known** that You sent Me;

25 "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me;

25 "Righteous Father, the world has never known you. Yet I have known you, and these men have known that you sent me.

25 O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

- Jesus now moves away from praying for our future glorification and begins to pray that we would continue to intimately know the Father
- "...known" [3x] - *ginōskō*, to know intimately; to know at a much deeper level than just facts or data about someone or something
- Although the world (unbelievers) do not know the Father intimately, the Son does, and the genuine believers do as well
- A relationship with God the Father always requires a relationship with God the Son. The Father and Son are always billed as a package deal (Cf. 5:23; 14:6).

(iii) Experience the Father's love (17:26b)

26 and I have **made Your name known to them**, and **will make it known**, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

26 I made your name known to them, and will continue to make it known, so that the love you have for me may be in them and I myself may be in them."

26 And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.

- "...made Your name known to them" - this short phrase summarizes the entire mission of Jesus Christ: to make the Father known (Cf. 14:7-9)

— How can we know God at an intimate level? We get to know Jesus Christ at an intimate level because Jesus Christ is the very manifestation of God the Father. As we seek to know and follow Jesus Christ from the Scriptures, we're getting a knowledge of God that we never had until God revealed Himself in human flesh.

- "...will make it known" - Jesus transitions His language here from the aorist (past) tense ("known to them") to the future ("will make it known")

— Jesus is saying that I have come into the world to make the Father known, and as you continue to walk with Me, I will make Him known to you more and more. Jesus came into the world to make the Father known, and He will continue to do so for us individually as we continue to walk with Him.

- Have you ever met someone who thinks they've arrived spiritually? They say, I've heard that before, I've acquired that knowledge already, and they are deceived that they have learned what they need to learn and they want to move onto other things. It may be good to move onto other things, but they give you this impression that they've arrived spiritually.

— This side of heaven, and maybe even afterward, we will never arrive spiritually. There is always further growth available for us. As long as God has us in this world, we are to continue to grow in Him until our life is done.

— If you are still basking in the things God showed you 5 years ago, 10 years ago, 15 years ago, and you've never grown or matured or developed past those initial truths, you've missed the boat. God has so much more for us than a stagnant, yesterday faith.

— I can be content and joyful in my spiritual growth and development over the past year, but if my growth and development next year does not surpass where I am this year, then I've missed the change in verb tense from aorist to future in this verse.

- Jesus experienced the love of the Father, and now He prays that the church would have this same experience from the love of the Father

— Notice that Jesus doesn't just want the church to *understand* His love, He wants us to *experience* His love

— But how is it that we (as mere mortals) can experience the love that the Father has for the Son? We can experience it because the Father will live inside of us. Jesus taught this same truth in 14:23.

— As the Father dwells/lives inside of us, we don't just have an intellectual knowledge of His love, we have an experiential knowledge of His love (Cf. Rom 5:5). As the Father lives inside of us, suddenly His desires become our desires, suddenly His thoughts become our thoughts. Thus, we move away from a cognitive, intellectual understanding of God to an experiential, relational understanding of God.

- "...I in them" - not only does the Father live inside of us, but the Son lives inside of us as well (Cf. 14:23; Col 1:26-27)