

## Exegetical Notes, John 17:1-26

### “Jesus Prays”

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### John 17:1-26

(This section of the Gospel of John is known as the “High Priestly Prayer.” It contains Jesus’ prayer of intercession for himself and for the Church. It can be divided into four parts as has been done below. In each part Jesus makes a specific request of the Father.)

### Part #1: Jesus Prays to Be Glorified

#### Verses 1-5

*After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:*

*“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.*

*<sup>2</sup>For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. <sup>3</sup>Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. <sup>4</sup>I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. <sup>5</sup>And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*

- After Jesus had finished explaining what was about to happen to him to his disciples, he prayed. He assumed the usual attitude of prayer, looking up into heaven. He addressed God as “father.” The address implies both respect and intimacy. He shows God the respect that a father is due from his son. However, there is implied a relationship like that which exists between a father and his beloved son.
- Jesus acknowledges that the “hour has come.” This means that he knows that the time has come for him to fulfill the purpose for which he was sent to earth. He was sent to earth and granted authority on earth to bring eternal life to those who believed that he had been sent to earth by God and was from God.
- Jesus prays to be glorified. Jesus’ glorification is to be allowed to do what he was sent to earth to do in obedience to the Father. See verse 4, “I have brought you glory by finishing the work I was sent to do.” See John 13:31.

And Jesus' glorification is to be returned to the position he had prior to being sent to earth. See John 1:14. He will be given his rightful position with the Father.

## **Part #2: Jesus Prays for The Protection of Believers**

### **Verses 6-12**

*“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. <sup>7</sup> Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. <sup>8</sup> For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. <sup>9</sup> I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. <sup>10</sup> All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. <sup>11</sup> I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. <sup>12</sup> While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.*

- Jesus' second petition is for “those God has given to him out of the world.” It is important to note that Jesus acknowledges that those who believe in him are a gift to him from God. While the petition is specifically referencing those disciples who were with Jesus when it was prayed, it means that all of those who believe throughout all time are regarded by Jesus as his gifts from God.
- They became believers because they heard the word of God and chose to obey it. Specifically, this means that they were led to believe that Jesus was the Christ sent from the Father to bring them eternal life. They know without doubt, they believe that Jesus is the Christ.
- Jesus makes it clear that he is praying only for believers and not all people.
- Jesus knows that he will no longer be with the believers because he will be glorified and return to the Father. He acknowledges that he has kept them safe while he was with them, but now prays that God will keep them safe by the power in his name.
- He asks that they be made one just as he and the Father are united.
- In verse 11, Jesus addresses God as “HOLY FATHER.” This title for God is used only in this verse in the entire Bible. It implies that God is entirely “HOLY.” It means that he is by nature entirely different than are we. He is

set apart and distinct. However, he remains “Father.” The Holy God is our Father. He invites us into close and intimate relationship with him.

### **Part #3: Jesus Prays for the Sanctification of Believers**

#### **Verses 13-19**

*“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. <sup>14</sup> I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. <sup>15</sup> My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. <sup>16</sup> They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. <sup>17</sup> Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. <sup>18</sup> As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. <sup>19</sup> For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.*

- Jesus says that, while he is coming to God soon and so could speak these things in God’s presence, he prays them while he is still in the world so that those hearing him will know that he is filled with joy and share in his joy. Though he faces pain and suffering he has joy.
- He is joyful because he has taught the disciples to believe in the word of God.
- Again, he asks God to protect them from Satan because they are not of the world. They are God’s children who live according to God’s word. Satan will attempt to pull them in or destroy them.
- Jesus prays that God will “sanctify” them. Salvation is the moment when one comes to knowledge of Christ as Savior. Sanctification is the process by which a believer grows to become increasingly Christ-like. Increasing knowledge of God’s word and God’s truth leads to sanctification.
- Hearing the word alone is not enough. To be sanctified, believers must live the word. That is what Jesus did. He prays that the Church will follow his example and become increasingly obedient to God’s word so that believers may be truly sanctified.

### **Part #4: Jesus Prays for the Ministry and Unity of Believers**

#### **Verses 20-26**

*“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup> that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup> I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may*

*be one as we are one—<sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

<sup>24</sup> *“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.*

<sup>25</sup> *“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me.<sup>26</sup> I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*

- The ministry of the church is to bring other persons to faith in Jesus Christ; to make disciples.
- Jesus prays again for the unity of all believers. He explains that in their unity others will see the glory of the Father and know that he was sent from the Father.
- Jesus asks God to let all believers come to the kingdom of God so that they might know him in his glory.
- In verse 25, Jesus addresses God as “**RIGHTEOUS FATHER.**” This title is also used only here in the Bible. To be righteous is to be totally without sin. Again, this title shows us that God is distinct and different from us. We have all sinned, but God is righteous. But, he still invites us to be his children. He is still our Father. This is revealed to those who believe by the Son. That our perfect Father chooses to call us his children is a sign of his deep love for us.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Coming Again*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by *Cornerstone Fellowship* & The Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen. They are used here by permission.)