

INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 17



1. The Prayer is marked by extraordinary language. It must be taken slowly, sentence by sentence, almost word by word, if it is to yield its inner meaning. Above all, it must be prayed as well as studied.

We will concentrate our attention on certain recurring themes:

But first we must notice that there is a certain shape to the prayer. The concern of Jesus, as it is expressed to the Father (1,5,24), to the Holy Father (11), to the Righteous Father (25), may be thought of in terms of three circles, each wider than the others in its outreach. The first circle is concerned with Jesus Himself, and occupies vv. 1-5. The second circle is concerned with the immediate followers of Jesus, the friends around Him (6-19). The third circle is concerned with the Church that is to be (20-26).

1. **THE HOUR** (1). John is heavy with this theme from first to last. Cana:2:4, His "hour" had not arrived. When the people at Jerusalem tried to seize Jesus after He had taught in the temple, they couldn't, "because His hour had not yet come (7:30; 8:20). "Not yet, not yet", is the repeated note of the first half of the Gospel.

But when we reach the story of 12:20ff, we find a change. When some Greeks came to Jesus. It was symbolic of the fact that the work of Jesus was to be effective not only for the Jews but the Gentiles as well. The PASSION is predominant from that point on -- the HOUR had come -- His death is imminent.

2. **GLORY** and **GLORIFY**. We are introduced to the idea of "glory" towards the end of the prologue (1:14). "And we beheld His -----". How would finish that statement? We beheld His humiliation? No, we beheld His GLORY.

Here is a paradox. "Flesh - glory"; this is the divine economy. And here is the clue to understanding of much that is fundamental in the writings of John. He would say to us, that if we want to understand the meaning of glory, we shall find it, not surrounded by the traditional paraphernalia of angels and clouds of brilliance and voices of thunder, but rather is a manger, at a carpenter's bench, and on a cross. At the moment of divine humiliation and sacrifice, the glory was seen, but veiled with the cloud of human flesh.

See chapter 13, the foot washing, Judas going out to betray Him -- and in the midst of that GLORY. Five times in the space of two verses, 31,32, comes the verb --"glory" and "glorified." THE DARKER THE SHADOW CAST BY THE CROSS, THE BRIGHTER THE LIGHT OF THE GLORY BECOMES!

In John 17, Jesus on the very threshold of His final act of humiliation; the offering for us and our salvation is just about to be made. But "glory" shines through the prayer with a radiance all the brighter for the nearness of the offering.

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Vincent Taylor: ".... the humiliation of the cross has practically disappeared; it is no longer a *skandalon* (stumbling-block) but a shining stairway by which the Son of God ascends to His father."

It is clear that this paradox is central to the whole Gospel, and it accounts for the vehemence of certain passages: In Chapter Five, the Jews are accused (44), in contrast to our Lord (41), of receiving glory from one another, and of failing to seek the glory that comes from the only God. See 7:18; 8:50, 54. The Jews showed a complete lack of appreciation of the basic principle of the Incarnation, of the whole scheme of things as seen through the eyes of God, that if we want to know the meaning of glory we shall find it in the service which is characterized by humiliation to the uttermost.

Jesus gave to His men the glory which God had given Him (22) -- the glory of unity such as belonged to the Father and the Son, unity of will and of purpose, manifesting itself in costly self-giving for the salvation of the world. That is the only glory He knew. It was the only glory for them.

3. *THE MEN WHOM THOU HAST GIVEN ME (6, 9, 11 24; CP. V.2)*

They were all He had -- a gift of incomparable worth from the Father to the Son. What could He do for them? Two things: **Training and prayer**

(1) Training. The content of this training is suggested in this prayer. He gave them what may be called *experiential religion* -- "I have taught them all that I learned from Thee" (8). This was no cold theorizing. This was the religion of Jesus Himself, His knowledge of the Father, His love for the Father, His insights into the meaning of the reign of God, shared with His men. Further, He gave them the doctrine of His own Person -- "That I came from Thee" --and they had "faith to believe. . . ." (8). Thus the faith was taught and caught; what was a vivid reality to Him became a vivid reality to them. Again, He gave them "Thy word" (14); the sacred principles of truth committed to Him He handed on to them. This is the training of the first order -- truth illuminated, made alive, by experience.

(2) Prayer. He prayed three things for them:

a. He prayer for their protection -- "protect by the power of Thy name those whom Thou hast given me" (11,15). He knew that anyone who espouses His cause becomes at once a target for special attack. Temptations of pride; temptations to split up into warring parties; these and a hundred other temptations.

b. He prays for their JOY. (13). The request is peculiarly phrased -- "The joy which is My own." He is not asking for the world's joy for them, a kind of joy that is dependent on success or popularity or any such thing; but for MY joy, that is to say, the joy of doing the will of God and of being utterly satisfied with Him.

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c. He prays that these men "may be with Me where I am" (v. 24). This is not simply that He and they might be together in heaven, to be separated no more. This is also a prayer for the present. It is a prayer which, if expressed in terms of John 15, would be that there would be no separation from the Vine and branches, but that, in the arid atmosphere of the world, the life-giving sap of the Vine might so flow into the branches that much fruit would be borne. The disciples need not wait for heaven to look upon the glory of Jesus (v. 24). Protection, Joy and Close Union -- this is the burden of the prayer of Jesus for the men God had given Him.

The phrase "the men whom Thou hast given Me" has, in this context, a unique significance. The One to whom these men were given was the Savior of the world, very God of very God, the only begotten of the Father. And "the men" were the apostolic band, the nucleus of the new Israel, the men who had continued with the Master in His temptations and to whom He appointed a kingdom (Luke 22:28-30).

BUT in the mystery and grace of God's dealings with His people, there are secondary senses in which we may use the phrase -- "the men whom Thou didst give me."

Preacher -- God has given him a congregation. Can he by-pass the preaching, study, etc. But he cannot, for these are the men and women whom God has given him. He is responsible to God for them. They are a sacred trust.

Parents--

4. **THE WORLD.** The men whom the Father gave to Jesus are given to Him "out of the world." Meaning of **WORLD**: Society organized apart from God. It is the transitory as compared with what abides (1 Jno 2:17). It is the order, with all its glitter and show, which the natural man thinks most important. It is the worlding pleasure, all its boasted pomp and show, which contrasts with solid joys and lasting treasures which none but Zion's children knew. The Evil One is described as the prince of the world.

These men are still "in the world." They have responsibilities to Caesar as well as to God. They must not seek to contract out of such responsibilities into an other-worldly and false isolationism. But at the same time they are "out of the world" -- the preposition indicates *separateness from the world*. While they are *in* it, they are *not wholly of* it. There is a dividing line between the world and the Church, and woe betide the Church and its witness if that line BECOMES BLURRED! HAS IT!!!!? Here is the tension in which the Church and every Christian finds itself, inexorably involved; and the success -- the health -- of the Christian life and witness depends on the measure in which he maintains that tension.

This is the tension of the Christian life -- "to be in the world", indeed, to rejoice in being there; but at the same time always to remember that as men whom God has given to Christ we are called "out of the world."

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5. **THE NAME** (VV. 6,11,12,26)

The name to a Hebrew meant more than to a Westerner. To know the name of a person was to be in touch with his person and the secret of his power (*Jacob asking the name of the angel*). Thus it is crucial to Moses to know the name of God if he is to be His messenger to the children of Israel.

Twice in this prayer Jesus declares that He had made God's name known to the men given to him (v. 6, 26; cp. v. 14). He has shown them what God is like. In seeing Him, they have seen the father. His own character and His verbal teaching about God have been in perfect harmony in the revelation of the nature of God. But the work was not complete; it had to be continued -- "I will make it known" (v. 26). How will this be. On the cross. There was the supreme manifestation of the heart and mind of God. But it is not only there. Must we not add: "Through the Church"? For it is the first task of the Church to "manifest the name" of God, to make His character known in its holiness and its majesty.

do not character as Father, keep them

It should, therefore, be the ambition of the Christian to be able to say, in some measure, at the end of every day: "I have manifested Thy name." So when we stand to speak for Him, we ought to be able to say at the end, "I have manifested the name of God, I have made clear some aspect of His character to those who have listened."

The success or failure of our life at its end will be measured by the degree that it is possible to utter these words

6. **SANCTIFY.**

If we ask why Jesus concentrated His care on them, we find that it was that they might be "sanctified", or "consecrated". The verb "to consecrate" has in the OT a strong sacrificial flavor. It is used of setting things aside and making them suitable for ritual purposes, and of dedicating persons to special work. Jesus looked toward the sacrifice of the Cross -- it was for them, "that they may be consecrated."

*unity - 1 - the meaning of unity
2 - the standard of unity - I + you
3 - the purpose of unity - word believe*

7. **ONE.**

Our Lord's Prayer for unity occurs four times in this chapter, v. 11, 21, 22, 23. About this unity we may ask two questions:

1. What kind of unity was in the mind of Jesus? "As we are one." The mutual love of the father and Son was the basis of their unity. The never-ebbing passion to know and do the will of the Father was the basis of His unity with Him. This is the unity for which he prays for those given Him, and was to give Him -- a unity of love and desire.

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2. What was the purpose of this unity? The answer is twofold:

(1) Evangelistic -- "that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me, v.21, "that the world may know. . . . " v. 23. A disunited Church is a Church evangelistically enfeebled. A divided world will give little heed to the voice of a divided church.

(2) "That they may be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, v. 24. To "Behold" in John means "to share in." This then is a prayer for shared glory which also means shared suffering. Cp. Phil. 3:10 and Romans 8:17.

Donald Coggan, *The Prayers of the New Testament*

II. Alan Richardson, *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*.

TIME:

The two modes of thought and expression may be termed "chronological" and the "realistic (concrete)". For modern Western man the emphasis is on the "chronological."

The CONTRAST between chronological and realistic is exhibited in the NT distinction between *chronos* (measured time, duration) and *kairos* (time of opportunity and fulfillment).

The most noteworthy thing about the NT terms for time is not only that they contain a word for temporal duration (*chronos*), but that throughout the whole book there runs the conviction that the "time" looked forward to by the prophets has actually arrived in history with the advent of Jesus Christ. The NT equivalent for the OT "time" or "season" is *kairos* -- time; and the affirmation that the expected time has arrived first appears on the lips of Jesus Himself.

The time of Jesus is *kairos* -- and so it is a time of opportunity. To embrace the opportunity means salvation., to neglect disaster.

ETERNAL LIFE:

A new dimension of life is opened to man, eternal life. This is not life without temporal limits, but the life-in-Christ and Christ-in-life. The transition to this eternal life can be made in time; but the temporal boundaries of human life do not affect it.

ONE IMPORTANT FEATURE of the NT use of *aion* is the distinction between the present *aion* or age or world, and that which is to come, a distinction which has temporal aspects, but is more "ethical" or "concrete". This world is characteristically an evil world, in which the minds of the unbelieving are blinded by the gods of this world. But the world to come is a world of eternal life, of resurrection life.

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Yet it must be understood that these two world do not stand in an order of temporal succession. The peculiarity of man's situation *now* is that, the *kairos* being upon him, he may at any point of this world's time step into to world to comen and eternal life as a present possession. So eternal life is not an uncharacterized duration; it is a "filled" magnitude -- Christ-filled.

Intro = love to hear some prayer - wouldn't it have been ~~not~~ wonderful to hear Jesus prayer

Selfless = don't touch the art

Success - two ways

1- Revealed The Father

2- Gave Eternal Life - Came - a gift - setting on signpost.

Why Protection?

1- The Absence of Jesus 1-

2- The Acceptance of The Word

3- The Antagonistic Antagonism of The Word 2-

4- The Advancement of The Word 3-