

John 17:1, 11, 20-22

“Bengel speaks of this chapter as the simplest in word, and profoundest in thought, in the whole Bible. The key to the thought is in the presence of the Spirit, who shall guide into all truth ([John 16:26](#)).”

“The prayer is intended to summarize in Jesus’ own words his relationship with the Father and the relationship he wished his disciples to maintain with him and the Father. The prayer is divisible into three parts: 1) Jesus’ prayer concerning himself (vs. 1-5), 2) his prayer for the disciples (vs. 6-19), and 3) his prayer for all believers present and future (vs. 20-26). Apparently the prayer was spoken either just before the small company left the room where they had eaten together or as they made their way out of the city, across the Kidron valley to Gethsemane” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary, John).

“These words - The words addressed to them in the preceding chapters. They were proceeding to the garden of Gethsemane. It adds much to the interest of this prayer that it was offered in the stillness of the night, in the open air, and in the especially tender circumstances in which Jesus and his apostles were. It is the longest prayer recorded in the New Testament. It was offered on the most tender and solemn occasion that has ever occurred in our world, and it is perhaps the most sublime composition to be found anywhere. Jesus was about to die. Having expressed his love to his disciples, and made known to them his last desires, he now commends them to the protection and blessing of the God of grace. This prayer is moreover a specimen of the manner of his intercession, and evinces the interest which he felt in behalf of all who should become his followers in all ages of the world” (Barnes’ Notes).

PRAYER FOR JESUS HIMSELF: (verses 1-5)

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 hour is come - That is, the appointed time for his sufferings and death” (Barnes’ Notes).

“*lifted up his eyes*] in calm confidence and in the assurance of victory ([John 16:33](#)). The attitude is in marked contrast to His falling on His face in the garden ([Matthew 26:39](#)).

“Father. Abba, Father.”

“*glorify thy Son*] By His return to glory ([John 17:5](#)) through suffering and death. Comp. [Php 2:9-11](#).

that thy Son also may glorify] By making known the glory of God, through the Son. To make God known is to glorify Him.

“The glorifying of the Father by the Son is the manifestation of God’s glory in the completion of the Messianic work by the mission of the Advocate and the future victories of the Church” (Ellicott’s Commentary).

Glorify thy Son - Honor thy Son. See [John 11:4](#). Give to the world demonstration that I am thy Son. So sustain me, and so manifest thy power in my death, resurrection, and ascension, as to afford indubitable evidence that I am the Son of God.

“That thy Son also may glorify thee - This refers clearly to the manifestation of the honor of God which would be made by the spread of the gospel among men, [John 17:2](#). Jesus prayed that God would so honor him in his death that striking proof might be furnished that he was the Messiah, and men thus be brought to honor God” (Barnes’ Notes).

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

“All flesh - All men” (Barnes’ Notes).

“give eternal life to as many as, &c.—literally, "to all that which thou hast given him." (Jamieson -Fausset-Brown).

[5And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.](#)

“With thine own self - In heaven, granting me a participation of the same honor which the Father has. He had just said that he had glorified God on the earth, he now prays that God would glorify him in heaven.

“With the glory - With the honor. This word also includes the notion of happiness, or everything which could render the condition blessed.

“Before the world was - There could not be a more distinct and clear declaration of the pre-existence of Christ than this. It means before the creation of the world; before there was any world. Of course, the speaker here must have existed then, and this is equivalent to saying that he existed from eternity” (Barnes’ Notes).

“Though the obstacles were many and though the prospect was terrifying, Jesus never once faltered from doing the Father’s will. He had one main petition: that the Father would receive him back to the glory he had relinquished to accomplish his task. This petition for a return to his pristine glory implies unmistakably his pre-existence and equality with the father. It confirms his claim that he and the Father are one” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary, John).

PRAYER CONCERNING THE DISCIPLES: (verses 6-19)

“By far the largest part of Jesus’ prayer relates to the disciples. He was much more concerned about them than about himself. He was sure of the suffering that was inevitable and the victory that was certain. The disciples, however, were a variable quantity; in themselves they were likely to fail. He had already predicted that they would desert him. Nevertheless, he prayed for them with confidence that they would be kept by the Father’s power and presented for a future ministry” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary, John).

6I 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.

“Have manifested thy name - The word "name" here includes the attributes or character of God. Jesus had made known his character, his law, his will, his plan of mercy - or, in other words, he had revealed God to them. The word "name" is often used to designate the person, [John 15:21](#); [Matthew 10:22](#); [Romans 2:24](#); [1 Timothy 6:1](#).

“Which thou gavest me - God gave them to him in his purpose. He gave them by his providence. He so ordered affairs that they heard him preach and saw his miracles; and he gave them by disposing them to follow him when he called them.

“Thine they were - All men are God's by creation and by preservation, and he has a right to do with them as seemeth good in his sight. These men he chose to designate to be the apostles of the Saviour; and he committed them to him to be taught, and then commissioned them to carry his gospel, though amid persecutions, to the ends of the world” (Barnes’ Notes).

11Holy Father, keep through thine own name those who thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one.

JESUS PRAYS FOR US: verses 20-16

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

“*Neither pray I for these alone* — I do not make my apostles the only subjects of this my last prayer; I pray likewise for all such as shall by their word, whether preached or written, be brought to *believe on me*, in whatever age or nation; *that they* also, being influenced by the same Spirit, and possessed of the same love; *may be one* — Truly and intimately; (see on [John 17:11](#);) *as thou, Father, art in me* — Dwelling in me by thy Spirit; *and I in thee* — By a constant, indissoluble union; that *they also may be one in us* — Closely and vitally united to us, and deriving from us the richest supplies of divine wisdom and grace, power, purity, and consolation. This also is to be understood in a way of similitude, and not of sameness or equality” (Benson Commentary).

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.

“that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us— The indwelling Spirit of the Father and the Son is the one perfect bond of union, knitting up into a living unity, first all believers amongst themselves; next, this unity into one still higher, with the Father and the Son. (Observe, that Christ never mixes Himself up with His disciples as He associates Himself with the Father, but says I in THEM and THEY in US).

“that the world may believe that thou hast sent me—sentest me. So the grand impression upon the world at large, that the mission of Christ is divine, is to be made by the unity of His disciples. (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown).

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

“Our Lord especially prayed, that all believers might be as one body under one head, animated by one soul, by their union with Christ and the Father in him, through the Holy Spirit dwelling in them” (Matthew Henry’s Commentary).

“And the glory ... - The honor which thou hast conferred on me by admitting me to union with thee, the same honor I have conferred on them by admitting them to like union with me.

“May be one, even as we are one - Not in nature, or in the mode of existence - for this was not the subject of discourse, and would be impossible - but in feeling, in principle, in purpose.” (Barnes’ Notes.

“God and man are together involved in bringing the new creation into being. The effect of this united testimony is a confirmation of the divine mission of Jesus and of God’s love for believers.” (Expositor’s Bible Commentary, John).