

GOSPEL OF YOHANAN

Chapter 17

We are now approaching what many call the Holy of Holies of the Gospel of John. It is the Lord's Prayer, the one that Jesus prayed. It is the prayer of the Son of God to God the Father. The outstanding thing is He prays it out loud for us and for the disciples so that we may all hear it or read it. I believe He does so, not only because He wants us to know the great treasures of truth contained in His prayer, but primarily because He wants to bring the believers across all boundaries of space and time to witness a glimpse of the great relationship that exists within the Trinity.

This is a rare privilege that we have in standing and witnessing this great prayer. It is a great opportunity that I believe is chiefly a pledge of love from God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit in allowing us to stand by and to witness.

Since **Chapter 13**, Yeshua, in many ways, showed His love for the believers. Beginning by stooping down to wash the disciples' feet, by promising us a place in heaven, by giving us the power of prayer, by promising the dwelling of His Spirit in our bodies, now this last chapter begins by telling us that He *lifted up His eyes to heaven*. In so doing, He brings us with Him to observe this great moment between the Father and the Son.

By allowing us to be present in their midst, He is reconfirming that we are indeed *heirs of God and joint heirs with Yeshua*, as we are told in **Romans 8:17**. He is confirming that now we may *eat and drink at His table in His kingdom* as He promised in **Luke 22:30**. He is confirming that He now *Grants us to sit with Him on His throne* as He promises in **Revelation 3:21**.

I believe that there is no greater testimony, pledge of love and assurance than the one we are about to see. **Chapter 17** marks a conclusion within the Gospel of John; right after this, begins the long and hard climb to the cross and the glorious resurrection and exaltation of our Savior. This chapter marks the end of Yeshua's ministry on earth. He is about to be separated from the disciples with whom He developed such a close relationship for three years. But, He does not really leave them, because He is God and He is omnipresent. He stays with them in Spirit as He is with each of the believers, today.

This is the chapter of hope—true hope from the Lord. The words therein have the power to lift us up and defy the gravity of our worries and qualms that always anchor us down. The Chapter begins by bringing us right in the midst of this great relationship between the Father and the Son. Let's read the first five verses.

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.

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

I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

First, Yeshua speaks here as if His death, resurrection and exaltation have already come to pass. How could Yeshua speak of the work as being finished before the time?

Simply because He is God and He is all powerful and omniscient. He allowed Himself to live as a human and He will soon allow man to mistreat Him and to crucify Him. But that was only for a moment because, for eternity, He is God.

The Son is first and foremost God. He is the *El Guibor* and the *everlasting Father* spoken of in **Isaiah 9:6**. He is the God that Jacob saw when he was given the new name “Israel.” He is the God that took on human form to be born in Bethlehem. But, as **Micah 5:2** reminds us, He is from *everlasting* and He knows the future as you know the present.

At this moment in **John 17** He stands out, as He really is, having behind Him a long trail of His ministry—of pleading with man and suffering in his hands. But all this was for a moment. Now, He ends by saying something quite extraordinary:

John 17:5

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

In **1 Corinthians 15:28**, we read similar profound words, that I am not sure we could comprehend now. See what it says, as it also projects our thoughts out of this world. *Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be **all in all.***

That God may be *all in all*; this is what we are witnessing here in **John 17**. The Son is about to be *all in all* with the Father—that is with the same Glory that He had before He came to earth. This is the glory that He had right at the beginning of the Gospel, as mentioned in **John 1:1**, where it is written that *In beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.*

These three passages, along with **Genesis 1** frame the time period where God decided to create, to redeem, and to share.

In **John 1:1** *In the beginning was God.* He was all alone. The Trinity was self sufficient.

In **Genesis 1:1** *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* God decided to create in order to share His creation with man.

In **Genesis 1:2** *The earth was without form, and void.* Sin entered the world and His creation is now seen as without form and void.

In **John 1:14** we are told that *the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*—in order to bring a remedy against sin which had entered the world.

In **John 17:5** we see Him at the threshold of His exaltation. Here Yeshua says: *And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.* The work is seen as finished and The Son is about to regain His place in the Heavens.

This is followed by **1Corinthians 15:28**, where everything is subject to God and where we see that God is *all in all*.

We are witnessing this transmission now. But **John 17** indicates to us that there is a little difference in the heavenly place between the time in **John 1:1**, when the *Word was with God*, and **1Corinthians 15:28**, when the Son went back home. The difference now is that WE are sitting with Him.

The effect of the work of Yeshua on earth was to bring us to be on His side. It is at this time that God is about to share His creation with man, without the hindrance of sin. It is now that God is about to freely spread His love on man.

This passage brings us right to the Eternal State where man will be free to exercise his full capacity as he was created, because sin would not be able to penetrate his holy state.

It is not a small thing to become a believer!

The wonderful thing is that Jesus speaks in the present tense in **John 17**, as if His word was already done, even before He died and resurrected. So our position with Him is spoken of in the present tense, as a done deal, even before we die and resurrect with Him.

Let me bring you to a great passage that is given to us in

Ephesians 2:4-6

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus

This is the true position of everyone who believes that Yeshua is the Messiah. It might not appear as such now, but it is a completed covenant. Rejoice in the fact that you, the believer, are going to the heavenly places with the Messiah. You will not only go, but you will be sitting with Him there. Nothing can match that! Bring all the riches of the world, all the happiness this world has to offer and it will not come near to what is given to us by our Lord and Savior, Yeshua.

In order to appreciate this truth, let us consider the seven positions of the Messiah, from the past to eternity.

1. First, we have the **Pre-incarnate Messiah**, as He was before all creation—He was God and with God, as **John 1:1** says. He was completely independent and in need of nothing or anyone.

2. After this, we see Him as the **Incarnate Messiah**. First as we see Him in His many manifestations in the Old Testament: as the Angel of the Lord, as the Captain of Salvation that appeared to Joshua, as the Lord that appeared to Abraham in the **Genesis 18**. Second we see Him born as a baby and during the 30 years He lived on this earth, we see Him work nonstop despite rejection.

3. Then we see Him at **His Death**, where He finally closes the deep chasm that separates us from God the Father.

4. Then we see Him as the **Resurrected Messiah**, where death and all evil were finally overcome.

5. Then we see Him **Ascending and Seated in Heaven**, as our great High Priest, always interceding for us.

6. Then we see Him **Returning**. First He returns and we meet Him in the air, as **1Thessalonians 4** tells us and then we come back with Him to rule the earth in **Revelation 19**.

7. Finally we see the **Messiah Reigning Forever**. Starting with the Millennium unto the Eternal State, Christ will reign for Eternity.

These are the seven positions of our great Messiah. All of these are done for the benefit of the believers. He did not need to do any of that; He did all these things for you.

In this passage, He speaks of an important concept, that of Glory.

Notice how the passage starts in **John 17:1**, as He says:

..... ***Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,***

Yeshua asks His Father to glorify Him, only so He can, in turn, glorify Him. The death and resurrection and exaltation of Yeshua glorify the Father. Then in **verses 4-5**, Yeshua appeals to His past work that glorified the Father.

*I have **glorified** You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, **glorify Me** together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*

The works of Yeshua, His miracles, His Words, all His doings glorified the Father. That is what Yeshua did from His incarnation to His exaltation; He did all while glorifying God the Father.

But how can we understand the word *glory*?

The glory of God is not an attribute. His glory is a word that depicts the totality of the nature of God. It is not an easy concept to grasp. The glory of God is His brightness or splendor. In response to His glory, we are told in **Isaiah 6** that angels are still saying in amazement: *Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;*

We are further told in **Revelation 15:8** that
The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power

We are told that heaven shines and radiates beautiful colorful lights because of His glory.

Revelation 21:11
having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

We are even told that His glory replaces all other lights.

Revelation 21:23
The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light.

God's glory is also His great power and strength; it is His great majesty and honor. This is what Yeshua came to do on this earth. He came to glorify the Father.

It is in this section that we are given a very simple and powerful definition eternal life:

John 17: 3
And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

To have eternal life is to know God and His Son Yeshua. One cannot have eternal life without the Father and the Son. The word to *know* in Greek means to perceive, to understand.

Everyone knows Jesus, even the demons, but there is a huge difference between simply knowing Him and really understanding and comprehending who He really is.

There are two main words for *knowing* in the Greek. One speaks of intuitive knowledge; the other, seen in **John 17:3**, requires one to search, learn and accept. The two words are both seen in what Yeshua says in **John 8:55**
Yet you have not known him, but I know him.

The first one is the same as in **John 17:3**; the disciples had to come and search who God and His Son are. The second one speaks of the intuitive—the knowledge that Yeshua had of the Father. He knows Him intuitively because He and the Father are one, being of the same essence. But we are not; we need to search, perceive and understand.

Eternal life is to come **to know God**. This quest, while at first gives us eternal life, becomes ongoing, I believe for all eternity.

Before entering the Holy Place in Heaven, in this prayer Yeshua begins to stand as the High Priest, because the rest of the prayer is concentrated on the believers—past, present and future. Here, He is both the High Priest and the offering.

It is in this great prayer that Yeshua refers to those who are saved, seven times, as those who were given to Him. These seven times He states that believers are the Father's gift to His Son. Let's go over these great verses; they will give us a sense of being loved and secured.

John 17: 2, 6, 9, 11–12, 24

*as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to **as many as You have given Him.***

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

*I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those **whom You have given Me**, for they are Yours.*

*Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those **whom You have given Me**, that they may be one as We are.*

*While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those **whom You gave Me** I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.*

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

Don't you get a sense that you, who believe, are secure in Him?

This connection, which we now have with Him, could especially be seen in the Old Testament with Aaron, the first High Priest. We remember in **Exodus 25:40** that God told Moses that the law that He gave him on Mount Sinai was according to a heavenly pattern. Now let's see the clarity of the pattern of the High Priest. Notice how Aaron was carrying the names of the sons of Israel in

Exodus 28:29

So Aaron shall bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy place, as a memorial before the LORD continually.

As Aaron was a type of Yeshua in His current ministry, in the same way, Yeshua carries your very name. That is, if you have accepted Him as your personal Savior, He now carries your very name, at all times, *over His heart*. That is a wonderful truth we are seeing here.

There is a progression of concern here from our High Priest. This prayer could be divided into three main concerns, that of Salvation, Sanctification and Glorification. In **verse 2**, Yeshua spoke of our salvation, where He emphasized the gift of eternal life. In **verses 6-19**, He is mainly concerned with our sanctification. It is in **verse 17** where He asks the Father to sanctify us through the Word.

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

Previously, He did the sanctification through the Word as well, as we see in **Verse 6**, where He says:

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

Again in **Verses 13-14**, we read:

But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

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.

What stands out is that the means of sanctification is the Word of God, which is the gift of God to us. The Word is of divine origin, a precious gift from heaven and Yeshua stresses here that it is the means of our sanctification. Our lives as believers should be according to the Word of God.

Yeshua also speaks of an effect of the Word in the believer as it sanctifies the individual. We are told that the Word of God *gives us joy*. See what Yeshua says in **John 17:13**

But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

He spoke the words that we now have, so that we may have joy. This is what the effect of the Word should do in the heart of the believers—provide great joy. Next time you see a believer in a gloomy mood—unless he is under extraordinary circumstances—you will know that the person is not in the Word, as he or she should be.

Previously, Yeshua told us that we may obtain joy through prayer. In **John 16:24** we read that:
Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

Now, He tells us that it also comes by reading the Bible. True joy is not found in this world but in the Word of God. The believer does not find his joy in the world but in the Word.

Men of God fully understood this. See **Jeremiah 15:16**

Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.

David also expresses the same joy as Jeremiah, in **Psalms 119:14**

I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies, As much as in all riches.

It is only in Yeshua that true joy may be found.

It was Charles H. Spurgeon, who emphasized to his class the importance of making the facial expression harmonize with the speech. "When you speak of Heaven," he said, "let your face light

up, let it be irradiated with a heavenly gleam, let your eyes shine with reflected glory. But when you speak of Hell—well, then your ordinary face will do."

But he was kidding; our ordinary faces as believers should always reflect God's glory.

But there is something else that is said in this section—something very powerful, where Yeshua speaks of carrying the *name* of God.

John 17: 6, 11

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

*Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through **Your name** those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.*

What is meant when He says *I have manifested **Your name***?

He means "I have revealed the nature of God." Now this task is given over to us. As believers, we carry and proclaim the name of the Lord. Carrying the name of God is to carry great power.

David understood this when He said in **Psalms 20:1**

May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble; May the name of the God of Jacob defend you;

Also, in **Psalms 54:1**

Save me, O God, by Your name, And vindicate me by Your strength.

Now, as the two first sections spoke of Salvation and Sanctification, the last section speaks of Glorification. **Verses 20-26** bring back glorification, but this time with a different focus as they speak of the glorification of the believers. These verses are, in a sense, the last words Yeshua addresses to the disciples. These are the words He would have told us, should He have been with us and had to leave us until our meeting with Him.

John 17: 20-23

I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Let us try to comprehend the depth of His Words, especially in **verse 22**.

And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

The truth that we find here is that, even as we are now, we already possess His glory within us. That is a mystery.

Do you see to which extent the Lord is going to assure us of our eternal security with Him? I don't quite understand what it means to possess His glory within me, but one thing I understand is that He wants me to know that He had already sealed me and that I belong to Him no matter what. That is great news. We possess that glory and we are told to glorify God.

What does it mean to glorify? Can we bring glory to God?

We glorify God when we confess our sins, when we commit ourselves to him. Remember Joshua when he pleaded with Achan to confess his sin of disobedience. He tells him in **Joshua 7:19**
...My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him...

We glorify God when we think of Him and worship Him and sing songs for Him. We also glorify God when we walk humbly and thankfully before him. We glorify God when we speak of Him. See again what Yeshua says in **Matthew 5: 16**
Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

We glorify Him when we bear all these fruits. See what Jesus says in **John 15:8**
By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Men of God, throughout the Scriptures, understood this great task of ours—to give glory to God. Samuel, Eli and David were consumed with this passion, this fervor, which carried them millions of kilometers away, to the throne of God.
See, for instance, what David says in **Psalms 29:1–2**
*Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones, Give unto the LORD glory and strength.
Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; Worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.*

It was John Edwards who also put it beautifully. He once said:
The first resolve is that all men should live for the glory of God. The second resolve is that whether others do or not, I will.

We are told in **1Corinthians 10:31**
Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

Whatever we do, it will be properly done if we do it to the glory of God. The truth is that man has a need to glorify someone or something. Giving glory to God is where man will find the fulfillment of his whole being. This is where he will find himself back to his true roots. It is a grace from God to be able to share in His glory and to bring it to the level of these mundane things that we do. It is the highest calling of man to glorify our God.

There is another word that is used nineteen times throughout this prayer; it is the word *world*. It is here that Yeshua tells us that we are not of this world; we are different. We are like strangers from another world, living here.

For instance, see what He says in **John 17:9**
I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.

Again in **John 17:11**

"Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, ...

In John 17:14-16

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.

I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

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

All of this tells us that we are not of this world, but that God decided to leave us in this world so that... See what He says:

John 17:21

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

John 17:23

I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

We are still left here to love the people of this world and, through this love, bring them to a saving knowledge of Christ.

You probably heard of the water spider which is an amazing little creature. It lives in rivers and streams. But how this fascinating species survives in its watery environment is amazing. It spins a tough basket-like web of silk, a kind of diving bell, and anchors it under water to plants or other objects. Then it captures a surface air bubble, which it pulls down and ejects into its underwater house, filling it with air. This combination of web building and bubble trapping allows the water spider to live in an environment that normally would destroy it.

This is a great image of the believer living in this world. As believers, we too live in an environment that could destroy us. The world's values, attitudes, and practices threaten to drown us, unless we are able to protect ourselves from them. How are we to survive spiritually in this hostile worldly environment? We must build a "bubble" of protection around ourselves by studying the Scriptures, praying, fellowshiping with believers, and communing with the Holy Spirit, trusting God, and obeying His Word. These activities will insulate our minds and help to keep us safe and secure.

As the water spider lives in the water but is not really in the water, so we must live in, but not be of, the world. This is our task here on earth. While our primary function is to give glory to God, our secondary main function is to reflect His glory unto this world that they may know that Yeshua is the Savior.

We are not to be part of the world. We are not to change the world. As given to us in the Scriptures, we are not to change the directive of the church to accommodate the world, as many

do today. Unlike those who *make His glory cease*, as Ethan says in Psalm **89:44**, we are to reflect the glory of God unto the world that they may know that Yeshua is the Messiah.

As someone remarked, many people take the letter "C" out of the "Great Commission," ending with the "Great Omission." It is a very slight change in spelling, but a very serious change in meaning.

There is another verse that we should not miss here.

Let's read **John 17:21** again.

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

How can we possibly be as one as Yeshua is One with the Father?

First, this oneness really means "one" in that both the Son and the Father share the same life—the same fundamental or essential life. Now, we ought to realize that we too share the same essential life. We are encouraged, here, to discover this great truth that binds us together.

Verse 21 is not only saying that we, the believers, should be as one and that we should love each other; this is implied. Yeshua brings this much repeated truth to a greater dimension. Yes! We ought to be as one, but the reason is because we are on our way to have the same fundamental and essential nature. We are on our way to spend eternity with each other and spend it in the very same place that Yeshua is preparing for us. We, as believers, are likewise so linked to each other. I believe that if you grasp this truth, you will then start to love each other as you never did before.

....that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me,

What happens when the world sees that? They will then recognize the peace that they were looking for and they will come and find Yeshua with us. It is a great blessing when someone comes to believe because of the love we have for each other.

This prayer ends with these beautiful words:

John 17: 24-26

Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me.

And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Here, there are no petitions. Yeshua concludes by saying that He desires that we will all be with Him in heaven. Furthermore, Yeshua's prayers are all according to the Father's will, and so we will be with Him.

He also brings back the fact that the world refused Him, while only a few did accept Him. Yet, upon all these, His prayer is that we all have the love of God in us. These are great words from our Savior, Words that bless our heart.

To conclude, we notice that there are seven requests in all that Yeshua formulated for the believer.

- 1- **Verse 11** That we should be as one as Yeshua and the Father are One
.... Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.
- 2- **Verse 13** That we have His joy
But now I come to You..... that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.
- 3- **Verse 15** That we are kept from the evil one
I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one
- 4- **Verse 19** That we be sanctified
And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth
- 5- **Verse 23** That we be sanctified and in unity, to bring the Word to the world.
I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me,
- 6- **Verse 24** That we be with Him in heaven
Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am
- 7- **Verse 24** That we may behold His glory
that they may behold My glory which You have given Me