

# CHAPTER 17

## INTRODUCTION TO JOHN 17

**Ver. 1.** *These words spake Jesus*, etc.] Referring to his sermons and discourses, his words of comfort, advice, direction, and instruction, delivered in the three preceding chapters:

*and lift up his eyes to heaven*; the seat of the divine majesty, the throne of his Father. This is a prayer gesture. It is said <sup>f633</sup> of R. Tanchuma, that *ܡܝܡܨܝ ܡܝܢܦ ܗܝܒܓܗ*, “he lift up his face to heaven”, and said before the holy blessed God, Lord of the world, etc. and this is expressive of the ardency and affection of the mind of Christ, and of his confidence of the divine favour: it shows that his mind was filled with devotion and faith, and was devoid of shame and fear, and was possessed of great freedom, boldness, and intrepidity:

*and said, Father*; or “my Father”, as the Syriac, Arabic and Persic versions read; and no doubt but he used the word Abba, which signifies “my Father”, thereby claiming his interest in him, and relation to him:

*the hour is come*; to depart out of the world, to suffer and die for his people, which was agreed upon between him and his Father from all eternity; and it was welcome to him, on account of the salvation of his people, and therefore he spoke with an air of pleasure and satisfaction; and it would be quickly over, was but an hour, as it were, though a time of great trouble, distress and darkness, and so a fit time for prayer:

*glorify thy Son*; as man and Mediator; for as God, he needed no glory, nor could any be added to him: but it designs some breakings forth of glory upon him at his death; by supporting him under all the sorrows and sufferings of it; and in carrying him through it; so that he conquered all his people’s enemies, and his own, sin, Satan, the world, and death, and obtained eternal redemption for them: and at his resurrection; by not suffering him to remain so long in the grave, as to see corruption; and by raising him at the exact time that was foretold by the prophets and himself; and by sending an angel to roll away the stone; and by raising some of the

saints along with him; and by putting such a glory on his body, as that it is the pattern and exemplar of the saints' resurrection: and at his ascension to heaven, when he led captivity captive; and at his session at the right hand of God, above all principalities and powers; and through the effusion of the Spirit upon his disciples, and the divine power that attended his Gospel, to make it effectual to great multitudes, both to Jews and Gentiles; by all which he was glorified, pursuant to this petition of his; in which his end is,

*that thy Son also may glorify thee*; as he had done throughout the whole of his life and conversation, and by his ministry and miracles; so now at his sufferings and death, through the salvation of his chosen ones, in which the wisdom, grace, justice, holiness, power, and faithfulness of God are greatly glorified; and in the after discharge of other branches of his mediatorial office, in making intercession for his people, in the ministry of his word and ordinances, by his servants, attended with his holy Spirit, and by the administration of his kingly office.

**Ver. 2.** *As thou hast given him power over all flesh*, etc.] All men, in distinction from angels; and these as fallen, as weak, frail, sinful, and mortal creatures; men of every nation, Jew or Gentile, and of every character, elect or non-elect: not but that he has also a power over angels; nor is his power over men limited to their "flesh" or bodies, but reaches to their spirits or souls also: which power is a governing, disposing, and judicial one; he rules them with a sceptre of righteousness, he disposes of them in providence as he pleases, and will judge them at the last day: and this is a power that is "given" him by his Father, and is not that original power over all things he has as God, and the Creator of them, which is natural, essential, and underived; but is a derived and delegated power, which he has as Mediator, as subservient to the ends and designs of his office: and as God glorified him as such, by giving him this power; so he glorifies him again, by acknowledging it, and by using it for the end for which it is given:

*that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*; eternal life is a gift, and not owing to the merits of men; indeed there is no merit in men's works, no, not in the best; for these are previously due to God, cannot be profitable to him, if done aright, are not done in the creature's strength, but through the grace of God, and bear no proportion to eternal life; which is in Christ's gift: not only the promise of it is in him, but that itself; it is put into his hands, and he came into this world, that his people

might have it; he has procured it, and has removed what lay in the way of their enjoyment of it; he has a right to bestow it, and their right unto it comes by him, through his blood and righteousness: the persons on whom he confers this gift, are not all men, but such as the Father in the everlasting covenant has given to him, as his people and portion, his spouse and children, his jewels and his treasure, to be saved and enjoyed by him; whom he has chosen and preserved in him, and made his care and charge; to these, and every one of these, Christ gives this great blessing; nor shalt any of them come short of it; and it is for the sake of this, that all creatures and things, all power in heaven and in earth, are given to him.

**Ver. 3.** *And this is life eternal*, etc.] That is, the beginning and pledge of it, the way unto it, and means of it, and what will certainly issue in it:

*that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* The knowledge of God here spoken of, is not the knowledge of him by the light of nature, and works of creation; for a man may know God in this sense, and not know him in Christ, nor anything of Christ; yea, may know God and profess him in words, and in works deny him, as the Heathens did; nor is eternal life known hereby, nor connected with it: nor is it such a knowledge of God as is to be obtained by the law of Moses, in which God is represented as a righteous and incensed Being; nor is there in it any discovery of God, as a God of love, grace, and mercy in Christ; nor any revelation of a Mediator, Saviour and Redeemer; nor can it either show, or give to persons eternal life; and yet what is here said of the knowledge of God and Christ, the Jews say of the law <sup>f634</sup>,

“one man said to his friend, let us dash them against that wall and kill them, because they have left *abh μl w[ yyj* , “eternal life”; (the gloss upon it is, *hrwt* , “the law”;) and employ themselves in a temporary life, the gloss says of this world, which is merchandise.”

More truly does Philo the Jew say <sup>f635</sup>, that

“fleeing to the Divine Being, “is eternal life”; and running front him is death.”

But this is to be understood of an evangelic knowledge of God, as the God and Father of Christ, as the God of all grace, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin, and of Christ Mediator; not a general, notional, and speculative knowledge; but a practical and experimental one; a knowledge

of approbation and appropriation; a fiducial one, whereby a soul believes in Christ, and trusts in his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice for salvation; and which, though imperfect, is progressive. The Arians and Unitarians urge this text, against the true and proper deity of our Lord Jesus, and his equality with the Father, but without success; since the Father is called the only true God, in opposition to the many false gods of the Heathens, but not to the exclusion of the Son or Spirit; for Christ is also styled the one Lord, and only Lord God, but not to the exclusion of the Father; yea the true God and eternal life; was he not, he would never, as here, join himself with the only true God; and besides, eternal life is made to depend as much upon the knowledge of him, as of the Father. The reason of this different mode of expression, is owing to the character of Christ as Mediator, who is said to be sent by the only true God, about the business of man's salvation. Nor is it of any moment what the Jew <sup>f636</sup> objects, that Jesus here confesses, that the true God is only one God; nor does he call himself God, only the Messiah sent by God; and that the Apostle Paul also asserts the unity of God, (<sup>s017</sup>1 Timothy 1:17); and therefore Jesus cannot be God: for Christ and his Father, the only true God, are one; and that he is the one true God with his Father, he tacitly suggests here by joining himself with him; and what the Apostle Paul says of the one and only wise God, may as well be understood of Christ, the Son of God, as of the Father; since all the characters in the text agree with him, and of him he had been speaking in the context.

**Ver. 4.** *I have glorified thee on the earth*, etc.] This is made use of as a reason and argument, why the Father should glorify him: Christ glorified his Father personally, as he held forth and expressed the glory of his person; and verbally, by ascribing, on all occasions, praise and glory to him; and really, or by deeds, and that by various ways: as in and by his ministry; by asserting he had his mission, qualifications, and doctrine, from him as a prophet; his principal work was to declare his Father's mind and will, his love and grace; nor did he seek his own, but his Father's glory: and by his miracles: for though these were proofs of his deity and Messiahship, and displays of his own glory; yet the glory of his Father, especially of his power, was eminently seen in them, for he referred them to him; and these were often the means of men's glorifying the God of Israel: and by his whole life and conversation, which was entirely according to the will of God; and every action of it was directed to his glory; particularly he glorified him by his early regard to his will, and the business he sent him

about; by his zeal for his Father's house; and by the exercise of the various graces of faith, hope, and love upon him: and as by his life, so at his death, even all the while he was "on the earth"; where God had been dishonoured by the sin of men; where Christ now was debased in human nature, and even that was for the glory of God; and this is said in distinction from heaven, where God is glorified by the angels, and where Christ would shortly be glorified in his human nature:

*I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*; by "the work" is meant obedience to the will of God; the destruction of all spiritual enemies, as sin, Satan, the world, and death; and the redemption and salvation of his people, which was "given" him to do: he did not take it upon himself, but being called to it he readily accepted of it; it was appointed, and cut out for him, in the council and covenant of grace; he was thoroughly acquainted with it; and though it was difficult, it was pleasant and delightful to him; nor did he leave it till he could say it is "finished"; as it was by himself alone, without the help of man; and is so complete that nothing can be added to it; and so firmly done, that it cannot be unravelled by men and devils: he speaks of it as done, because the time was come to finish it, and he was sure of the accomplishment of it.

**Ver. 5.** *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self*, etc.] Not with his perfections, these he had, they dwelt bodily in him; or with his nature, in which he was one with him; but as Mediator, with his glorious presence in heaven, by setting him at his right hand, and crowning him with glory and honour. The Jews have a notion that God will give to the King Messiah, *hl [m l ç dwbkh ^m*, "of the supreme glory"<sup>f637</sup>: the glory Christ prays for is, as he says,

*the glory which I had with thee before the world was*; the same phrase with *μl w[ l*, or *μl w[ h μdwq*, used by the Jews<sup>f638</sup>. This is not to be understood of the glory of the human nature of Christ, abstractly considered; for that is no person of itself, but what is taken up into personal union with the Son of God; and therefore cannot be intended by this personal character I; nor did it exist from eternity; it was indeed written in God's book of predestination, even all its members, when as yet there were none of them in actual being; it was set up in God's thoughts and counsel, as the pattern and exemplar of human nature; it had a federal union with the Son of God, or a covenant subsistence with him; and in the Old Testament Christ was often spoken of as man, because of his frequent

appearances in an human form, and because of the certainty of his incarnation; but he did not really and actually exist as man, until he took flesh of the virgin; for Christ, as man, is the seed of the woman, the son of David, Abraham, and Adam; he is called the last and second Adam, and was not as man before the first: the Old Testament speaks of his incarnation as future, nor is it possible that a creature can exist before time; for as soon as a creature exists, time begins, which is nothing else than the measure of a creature's duration; nor was the human nature of Christ with the Father from eternity; nor had it a glory before the world began, neither in whole, nor in part: nor is the glory of the divine nature abstractly considered here meant; this glory indeed Christ had from everlasting; he had it with his Father, in common with him, being in union to him; and it is true that it was in some measure veiled and covered in his state of humiliation; for though there were some breakings forth of it in that state, these were seen but by a few; wherefore he is thought by some, to pray here for the manifestation of this glory; but this glory was essential to him, was his natural right, and not to be prayed for, and which he then had as much as ever, and of which there could be no suspension: but this designs the glory of him as Godman, and Mediator; he was not only predestinated to be a Mediator, but was really set up as such from everlasting, and had a mediatorial fulness of grace put into his hands, and had the honour and glory of that office given unto him by the other two persons; and now that he might appear to be what he was, to be made, that is, made manifest that he was both Lord and Christ, he here prays; which was to be done, upon his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, by the pouring down of the Holy Ghost.

**Ver. 6.** *I have manifested thy name*, etc.] Not the “Nomen Tetragrammaton”, the name of four letters, the name “Jehovah”, and which the Jews call “Shemhamphorash”, and say is ineffable, and to be pronounced by Adonai; who also speak of other names, and say <sup>f639</sup>,

“truly the former wise men had holy names, which they received from the prophets, as the name of “seventy two” letters, and the name of “forty two” letters, and the name of “twelve” letters, and many other holy names; and by which they could do new signs and wonders in the world; but they did not make use of them, only in case of necessity, as in a time of persecution and distress.”

The name of twelve letters, Galatinus<sup>f640</sup> pretends, is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the words for which in the Hebrew language consist of twelve letters; and that of forty two letters he makes to be this, the Father God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God, yet there are not three Gods, but one God; or thus, the Father God, the Son God, the Holy Ghost God, three in one, one in three; the Hebrew words for which contain forty two letters; but the authorities by which he would support all this are insufficient. However, it is none of these names, nor any other scriptural ones, that are here meant; but either God himself, or the perfections of his nature, or his will of command, or rather his Gospel; unless Christ himself, or his name Jesus, God by the angel gave him, and in whose name there is salvation, and no other can be thought to be meant; and which, as it was manifested to his disciples, so it is to all whom God has chosen and given to Christ:

*unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world;* which is to be understood, not merely of their being given to him as apostles, nor of their being given and brought to him in the effectual calling only, but of an eternal act of God's in election, and in the covenant of grace; when these persons were given to Christ as his spouse, his spiritual seed and offspring, the sheep of his pasture, and his portion and inheritance, to be saved and preserved by him; which as it is an instance of love and care on God's part to give, and of grace and condescension on Christ's to receive, so of distinguishing goodness, to the persons given; since not all the world, but some of it, share in this favour:

*thine they were, and thou gavest them me;* the persons given were not the Father's merely by creation; for so others are his also; nor would they be peculiarly his, for they are the son's likewise in this sense; but they are his by electing grace, which is the peculiar act of the Father in Christ, and is unto salvation by him, through the sanctification of the Spirit; these are chosen to be his peculiar people, and given to Christ as such:

*and they have kept thy word;* the Gospel, not only in their memories, but in their hearts; and having publicly professed it, they defended it valiantly against the enemies of it, and kept it pure and incorrupt; this shows that the Gospel is meant by the name of God manifested to these persons.

**Ver. 7.** *Now they have known,* etc.] The Syriac version reads it t [dy, "I have known"; and so the Persic and Gothic versions, contrary to most copies and other versions, which read, as we render, "they have known", that is, the disciples and apostles of Christ:

*that all things whatsoever thou hast given me*; all temporal things, the world and the fulness of it; all power in heaven, and in earth, or a power of disposing of all things for his own service, as Mediator; all spiritual things, the covenant of grace, with all its blessings and promises, the Spirit of God, with all his, gifts and graces, a fulness of all grace for his people, yea, eternal life and glory; and everything relating to his mediatorial office and character, power to perform miracles, knowledge and wisdom to preach the Gospel, strength to procure the salvation of his people; every thing to qualify him for the government of church and the judgment of the world:

*are of thee*; owing to his good will and pleasure, by his appointment and constitution, as an instance of love to him, and that he might, as man, and Mediator, be honoured, and in all things have the pre-eminence, and all for the good of his chosen ones: now the knowledge of this by his disciples, must greatly confirm the mission of Christ, render him very suitable to them, cause them to entertain a greater esteem for him, lead them into some admiring views of the grace of God, in giving so much into Christ's hands for them, and engage them the more cheerfully to obey his commands.

**Ver. 8.** *For I have given unto them the words*, etc.] Not commands, but doctrines; and these not the doctrines of men; nor any of the divers and strange doctrines; but what are called in Scripture the doctrine of God, of Christ, of the apostles, are agreeably to the Scriptures, and according to godliness; and are styled the word of truth, of faith, of righteousness, of peace and reconciliation, of life and salvation, and of the Gospel; and which Christ gave to his disciples, and gifts along with them to preach them, and abilities to help them:

*which thou gavest me*; for the words and doctrines which Christ, as the great prophet in Israel spoke, were not his own, but his Father's; and these were given him to speak and deliver to others, and in which he was faithful; so Jonathan ben Uzziel<sup>f641</sup> paraphrases the text in (<sup><C61818></sup>Deuteronomy 18:18); concerning that prophet, the Messiah, God would raise up, after this manner;

“a prophet will I raise up unto them from among their brethren, in whom the Holy Spirit shall be, like unto thee; *ymgt p ^tyaw*, “and I will give the words”, of my prophecy into his mouth, and he shall speak with them all that I have commanded.”

And so the Messiah Jesus did:

*and they have received them*; willingly and gladly, with reverence and meekness, with love, and thankfulness; so as to understand them and believe them, and so as to be affectionately and closely attached to them:

*and have known surely that I came out from thee*; which is meant, not of his eternal filiation, but of his constitution and commission, as Mediator by his Father: of which they had certain knowledge, full assurance of faith, and sincerely owned and confessed being fully persuaded he was the true Messiah, and no impostor:

*and they have believed that thou didst send me*; into this world, to seek and to save lost sinners, to redeem all the chosen ones, and perform everything necessary to their salvation.

**Ver. 9.** *I pray for them*, etc.] This is to be understood of Christ, not as God; for as such he is the object of prayer; nor need he pray to any other; nor is there any superior to him under that consideration to pray unto; but as man and Mediator: nor is his praying any argument against his deity; nor proof of inferiority to his Father with respect to his divine nature; since it is not in that, but in his human, nature, that he prayed; though this may be ascribed to his whole person as Godman; hence he had the greatest qualifications and abilities for this work, and his prayers were always heard: praying, as attributed to Christ, must be restrained to his state of humiliation; prayer is never spoken of Christ but whilst he was here on earth; his intercession in heaven is never expressed by prayer; and the saints when they come thither, will have done praying, Christ whilst on earth, was an excellent pattern of prayer; of private and solitary prayer; of social prayer; for and with his disciples; of frequent and fervent prayer; of submission to the will of God in prayer; and of praying even for enemies: the persons he is here said to pray for are his apostles; which shows their danger and their wants, his care over them, and concern for them, and his love unto them:

*I pray not for the world*; the inhabitants of it, the carnal unbelieving part of the world, which lie in sin, and will be condemned; as he died not for them, so he prayed not for them; for whom he is the propitiation, he is an advocate; and for whom he died, he makes intercession; and for no other in a spiritual saving way:

*but for them which thou hast given me*; out of the world, as distinct from them, to be saved with an everlasting salvation by him; and to be preserved safe to his kingdom and glory; for these he prays, for the conversion of them, the application of pardon to them, their final perseverance and eternal glory:

*for they are thine*; not merely by creation, and as the care of his providence, but by eternal election, and special grace in calling; which is a reason why Christ prayed for them, and an argument why the Father should, and would regard his prayers.

**Ver. 10.** *And all mine are thine, and thine are mine*, etc.] Christ is speaking not of things but of persons; otherwise all the perfections of his nature as God, and all the works he did, and doctrines he taught as man, were of his Father; as all the perfections of his Father, his nature, his names, his works, his worship, were his; the same that belongs to the one belongs to the other: but persons are here meant, and these the elect of God, particularly the apostles, who were his and his Father's; belonged to them both by election, covenant transactions, redemption, and efficacious grace in conversion; which mutual interest arises from an union in nature, an agreement in covenant, and a conjunction in operation:

*and I am glorified in them*: or by them, they ascribing all divine perfections, works and worship to him; attributing the whole of their salvation to him, and giving him all the glory of it; believing in him; walking worthy of him, in their lives and conversations; suffering patiently and cheerfully for his sake; and abiding by his Gospel and ordinances; and he will be glorified by them, and in them hereafter, and that to all eternity.

**Ver. 11.** *And now I am no more in the world*, etc.] In the earth; which is no contradiction to his resurrection from the dead, and stay with his disciples for a while; nor to his return to judge the world at the last day; nor to his reigning on earth with his saints a thousand years; since it will not be the world as it now is, but it will be a new earth, renewed, purified and refined, and clear of the wicked inhabitants of it; and in which will only dwell righteous persons: besides, Christ was to be, and will be no more in the world, in such circumstances, and doing such work as he then was: the meaning is, that whereas he had been in the world, and had done, or as good as done the work he came about, he was now just going out of it; it was but a very little while he had to stay in it; nor should he continue long with his disciples when he rose from the dead; and whereas his bodily

presence had been a guard unto them, a protection of them, and he had bore the heat and burden of the day for them, and had took all reproaches and persecutions upon himself, now he was going from them:

*but these are in the world;* and will continue for some time, they having much work to do, and be exposed to the evils, snares and temptations of it; where they were hated, and were liable to great hardships, afflictions and persecutions; which shows that Christ was not so intent on his own glory, as to neglect the good of his people, and to be unconcerned for them:

*and I come to thee;* signifying his death; the deposition of his soul into his Father's hands; his ascension in soul and body to him; his entrance into heaven, and session at the right hand of God; and therefore had nothing to ask for on his own account: but his disciples he was parting with lay near his heart, and therefore he prays;

*holy Father, keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me:* the person prayed unto is God the Father, the Father of Christ, and of his people; a very proper relation to consider God in and under in prayer to him: since it must give freedom, boldness, and hope of success: the epithet "holy" is exceeding suitable, as it perfectly agrees with him who is essentially so; and since it was holiness and an increase of it Christ prays for; and that there his disciples might be kept from the evil of sin: the persons prayed for are those that were given to Christ in election, and in the covenant, to be kept by him, and therefore he is the more solicitous for their preservation: his request is, that his Father would keep them from the evil of the world; from sinking under temptations and afflictions; faithful to him and to his Gospel, and in unity among themselves; and that "through" or "in" his own name; in it, in the doctrine of the Gospel, and in the worship of God, and profession of him; "through" it, through himself, as a wall of fire about them, and by his power through faith unto salvation:

*that they may be one as we are;* in nature, will, affection and understanding; which must be understood not of equality, but of likeness; and designs not their union to Christ, but to one another; abiding together, cleaving to each other, standing fast in one Spirit, having the same designs, and the interest of a Redeemer in view, and at heart.

**Ver. 12.** *While I was with them in the world,* etc.] This does not imply that Christ was not in the world now, for he was; but signifies that he was just going out of it; and that his continuance in it was very short: nor that he

was, and would be no longer with his disciples; for this is to be understood of his bodily, not of his spiritual presence; in which respect Christ is with his people whilst they are on earth, and they are with him when he is in heaven:

*I kept them in thy name*; by his Father's authority and power, in his doctrine:

*those that thou gavest me I have kept*; that is, those that were given him to be his apostles;

*and none of them is lost*; these he kept close to himself, and from the evil of the world, and from temporal and eternal ruin:

*but the son of perdition*; Judas, a child of Satan, whose name is Apollyon the destroyer, who was now about to betray his Lord and master; and was one that was appointed to eternal ruin and destruction, of which he was justly deserving; and which is no instance of the apostasy of saints, since though he was given to Christ as an apostle, yet not in eternal election, to be saved by him:

*that the Scripture might be fulfilled*; this respects either Christ's keeping of his people, and their final perseverance, whereby the Scriptures that speak of it are fulfilled; or rather the destruction of Judas, whereby such passages as speak of that, have their accomplishment, particularly (<sup><4908></sup>Psalm 109:8); Some have thought that this only refers to the general sense of the Scriptures, both the law and prophets; that some are chosen to everlasting life, and others are appointed to wrath; that some are saved, and others lost; some sons of God, and others sons of perdition; but it rather seems to regard some particular passage or passages of Scripture relating to Judas, his character, condition and end, and which are very manifestly pointed at, in the psalm referred to;

“As for the servants whom I have given thee, there shall not one of them perish; for I will require them from among thy number.” (2 Esdras 2:26)

**Ver. 13.** *And now come I to thee*, etc.] As in (<sup><4871></sup>John 17:11), which he repeats as a very great happiness to himself, and with much pleasure and joy, but not without concern for those he was parting from:

*and these things I speak in the world;* which he had expressed in this prayer concerning the nature of eternal life, and his power to give it to all the Father had given him; concerning the work of redemption finished by him, and the glory due unto him on that account; concerning his chosen ones, particularly the apostles, and the mutual interest he and his Father had in them; and what he had done for them, in revealing the Gospel to them, keeping them by the powerful influence of his grace, and the great concern he had for their future preservation: and these things he took notice of in his prayer, whilst he was in the world, before he took his leave of them;

*that*, says he,

*they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves:* either the joy which Christ had in them, which was of an early date, is still continued towards them, and will be more fully expressed, when they shall all be brought safe home to glory, and be for ever with him; or else the joy of which Christ is the author and object, which comes from him, and centres in him: saints rejoice in the person of Christ; in the greatness and dignity of his person, as God over all; hence they know that what he did and suffered answered the purpose, that he must have great interest in heaven, and they must be safe in his hands; and in the fitness of it, to be a Mediator, he being God and man in one person; and in the fulness of it, which is all theirs, it is with delight they view it, with joy they receive from it, and believe they shall not want; and in the beauty of it, he being fairer than the children of men. The offices Christ bears as prophet, priest, and King, the relations he stands in as father, husband, brother and friend; his Gospel and communion with him, the blessings of grace in him, as peace, pardon, righteousness and salvation, lay a foundation for solid joy in them that believe; as do also his death, resurrection, exaltation and intercession. This joy in him is a grace of the Spirit, and is attended with faith in Christ; it should be constant, but is frequently interrupted; though the ground and foundation of it is always the same; it is therefore at present imperfect, but may be increased; it is unknown to the world, and inexpressible by the saints; and may be said to be “fulfilled” in them, when it abounds in them more and more; when they are full of it, and that is full of glory, and which will be fulfilled in glory.

**Ver. 14.** *I have given them thy word*, etc.] The Gospel, and a commission and abilities to preach it, and which is a reason of what follows, namely, the world’s hatred of them; because this word is not of men, nor agreeably

to carnal reason; it magnifies the grace of God, and destroys boasting in men; it is against the carnal interest, worldly views and lusts of men:

*and the world hath hated them*; the inhabitants of the world, worldly men, such as are what they were when they first came into the world; are under the influence of the god of the world, and led by the spirit of it, and are wholly taken up with the things thereof: the unbelieving Jews are chiefly designed, who bore an implacable hatred to Christ and his apostles; and the same fate do the faithful ministers of Christ and his members share, in all ages and places, more or less: the men of the world gnash their teeth at them, secretly plot against them, and inwardly curse them; rejoice at any evil that befalls them; greedily catch at anything to reproach them; stick not to say all manner of evil of them, and to do all manner of evil to them:

*because they are not of the world*; they were of the world by their natural birth, and had their conversation with the men of it, whilst in a state of unregeneracy; but now they were called out of it, and were guided and led by another spirit; and were separate from the world in their lives and conversations, and which brought the hatred of the world upon them; inasmuch as they had been of them, but now had left them, and professed they did not belong to them; and because their religious lives put a distinguishing mark on them, and reprov'd and condemn'd them:

*even as I am not of the world*; not that Christ and his people are alike in their original; they are of the earth earthly, he is the Lord from heaven; nor are they so perfect in their walk and conversation in the world, and separation from it as he; yet there is some likeness between him and them, and some conformity in them to him, which makes the world hate them.

**Ver. 15.** *I pray not that thou shouldest take theft of the world*, etc.] Either in an unusual manner, by a translation, as Enoch and Elijah were; or by death in its common form, before their time, and purely to be rid of afflictions: this he prayed not for; for he had much work for them to do, by preaching the Gospel, for the conversion of sinners and comfort of saints; and it was for his interest they should live longer; and it would make most for his glory, and be best for his chosen people and churches:

*but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil*; either of sin, which is an evil and bitter thing, being committed against a good God, and a righteous law, and brings ruin and destruction upon men; from this the apostles were kept, and all the saints are; not from indwelling sin, nor from the

commission of sin, but from the dominion of it, and from falling into it and by it, so as to perish eternally: or from the evil of the world; not from afflictions in it; nor from the reproach and persecution of it; but from its wickedness and lusts, and from the evil men of it: or from Satan the evil one, who is eminently, originally, and immutably so; not from being tempted by him, but from sinking under his temptations, and from being devoured by him. Christ's praying for this, after this manner, shows that evil is very abhorrent, pernicious and powerful; the danger saints are in by it; their incapacity to keep themselves from it; and that the Lord alone is the keeper of his people; but does not suggest that Christ has dropped the charge of them, or is unequal to it; but by so doing he expresses his great love to them, how dear they are to him, and what care he takes of them, and what concern he has for them.

**Ver. 16.** *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*] These words are repeated from (<sup>4874</sup>John 17:14), where they are given as a reason of the world's hatred to them; and here, as showing that they are exposed to the evil of it; and in both are used as an argument with his Father, that he would take notice of them, and preserve them.

**Ver. 17.** *Sanctify them through thy truth,* etc.] The Syriac version introduces this petition, with the appellation *aba*, "Abba, Father": and the sanctification prayed for regards the apostles, either as ministers of the word, and may intend their separation for their work and office; for which though they were sanctified or separated from their mother's womb, and by Christ when he sent them forth, yet were to have a fresh commission and unction after our Lord's resurrection, and upon his ascension to heaven; and also their qualification for it, with the truth of grace and doctrine, with holiness of heart and life, and with a preservation in the truth, by being kept faithful to it: or it may also regard them as Christians and believers, and intend a greater degree of the sanctification of the Spirit, which is imperfect in this life; for though sanctification in Christ is perfect, and so it is in the saints, as to parts, yet not as to degrees; which appears from the imperfection of faith, hope, love, and knowledge, from indwelling sin, being in the best of saints, from their necessities, from their disclaiming perfection, and their desires after it. Sanctification is a progressive work, which is carried on gradually; as is clear from the characters of regenerate ones, who are first newborn babes, then young men, and afterwards fathers in Christ; from the similes, by which it is expressed as seed which opens and grows up by degrees, and light which shines more and more unto the

perfect day from exhortations to a concern for the growth of it, and prayers for it: and it is indeed continually carrying on, as may be concluded from the hand in which it is; and the progress and finishing of this work, as well as the beginning of it, are entirely the Lord's; and the way and means in which this is done, are by or through the truth of the Gospel:

*thy word is truth*; it is "peculiarly" so, as the Arabic version reads it. The Gospel is here meant, and is so called on account of its original, it comes from the God of truth; and because of the concern which Christ, who is the truth, has in it, he being the author, preacher, and sum and substance of it; and because the Spirit of truth has dictated it, leads into it, qualifies men to preach it, and makes it effectual: and because it contains all truth necessary to salvation, and nothing but truth, and particularly that eminent truth, salvation alone by Christ; and because it is opposed to the law, which is but a shadow, of which the good things in the Gospel are the substance: now this is the means both of the beginning, and increasing, and carrying on the work of sanctification in the hearts of God's people, as well as of an experimental knowledge of it; and an increase of that knowledge does more and more qualify the ministers of it for their ministerial work and service, which seems here chiefly designed.

**Ver. 18.** *As thou hast sent me into the world*, etc.] Which does not suppose inequality of nature, nor change of place, nor any force upon him, nor disrespect unto him, or a state of separation from his Father; but that he was before he was sent; that he was a person, a divine distinct person from his Father; and designs the manifestation of him in human nature; and shows, that as Mediator, he had a divine warrant and authority, and was no impostor: what he was sent into the world to do, was in general the will of God; particularly to preach the Gospel, and chiefly and more especially to work out the salvation of his people:

*even so have I also sent them into the world*; to preach the Gospel likewise: he had already sent them forth on this errand, and in a little time they were to receive a new and enlarged commission for this service; which mission of them to such work, implies great honour put upon them, authority in them, and qualifications with them; and hence success attended them: the place into which they were sent is, "the world"; first the Jewish and then the Gentile world, and every part of it; out of which he would not have them taken; and where they were sure to meet with reproach and persecution; and where God's elect lay, who were to be converted through

their ministry; for the work they were sent thither for, was to open blind eyes, turn men from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sin, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified: now though there is not an equality between the mission of Christ by his Father, and of the apostles by him, yet there is a likeness; there is an agreement in their original, both are divine and of authority; in the place they were sent, the world; and in their work to declare the mind and will of God: all which carries in it a strong argument with his Father to regard these persons; for inasmuch as they were in a world that hated them, they needed divine power and protection; and being in a wicked world they needed sanctification and preservation; and having such work to do, they therefore needed divine assistance, and fresh supplies of grace.

**Ver. 19.** *And for their sakes I sanctify myself*, etc.] Which is to be understood, not of his making himself holy; for he never was a sinner, and so stood in no need of sanctification: he was made like unto us, yet without sin; he looked like a sinner, but was not one; he was traduced, charged, and treated as such, but was perfectly holy, and free from all sin; he was essentially and infinitely holy as God; and as man, he was holy in his conception and birth; he was filled with the Holy Ghost, and was holy in his life and in his death: rather this may be meant of his being separated, and set apart for his office as Mediator, which, though done by the Father, and is ascribed unto him, (~~Exod~~ John 10:36); yet may also be attributed to himself; since he voluntarily devoted himself to this work, and cheerfully accepted of it: though it seems best to understand it of his offering himself a sacrifice for, and in the room and stead of his people, in allusion to the offerings under the law, the sacrificing of which is expressed by sanctifying, (~~Exod~~ Exodus 13:2,14,15); and because his sacrifice was an Holy One: what he sanctified or offered was “himself”: not his divine, but human nature, his body and his soul; and these as in union with his divine person; which gives his sacrifice the preference to all others, and is the true reason of its virtue and efficacy; and this is expressive of his great love. He himself is also the sanctifier or offerer, which shows him to be a priest, and that he had a power over his own life, and that he sacrificed it voluntarily; and this he is said to do at that present time, because the time was very near that he was to be offered up, and his present prayer and intercession were a part of his priestly office. This he did not for his own sake, nor for the sake of angels, nor for all men, but for his disciples, as distinct from the world; and not for

the apostles only, but for all that the Father had given to him; and that as their substitute and surety, in their room and stead:

*that they also might be sanctified through the truth*; that is, have all their sins expiated, and they be cleansed from all the guilt and filth of them, through Christ himself and his sacrifice, who is the truth; or “in truth”; as it may be rendered, really and truly, in opposition to the legal sacrifices which atoned for sin, not really, only typically; or through the Gospel of truth, bringing the good news of atonement by the blood and sacrifice of Christ, and which the Spirit of God seals to the conscience with comfort and joy.

**Ver. 20.** *Neither pray I for these alone*, etc.] Meaning his immediate apostles and disciples, for whose preservation and sanctification he had been particularly praying in (<sup>4879</sup>John 17:19); and now, that it might not be thought that these were his only favourites, and the only persons he had a regard for, and to whom his intercession and sacrifice were confined; he adds,

*but for them also which shall believe in me through their word*: Christ is the object of true faith; which faith is not a mere assent of the mind to any truth concerning Christ, as that he is the Son of God, the Messiah and Saviour of the world; but it is a spiritual sight of him, of the necessity, fitness, and suitableness of him as a Saviour, a going forth unto him, laying hold on him, and depending upon him for life and salvation; of which the preaching of the Gospel is the instrumental means: it is indeed a gift of God, and a fruit of electing grace, and which is secured by it; hence our Lord knew that there would be a number, in all successive generations, that would believe in him, through the ministry of the word; and for these persons, and their conversion, and the success of the Gospel, to the good of their souls, he prays.

**Ver. 21.** *That they all may be one*, etc.] Among themselves. This may regard their unity in faith, and in the knowledge of Christ; for there is but one faith which all truly experienced souls agree in: they are converted by the same Spirit, and have the same work of grace wrought in them; and though they have not the same degree of light, and measure of spiritual knowledge, yet they agree in the main point of the Gospel, salvation alone by the Lord Jesus Christ; and such an agreement in the doctrine of faith, and the grand articles of it, respecting the person and offices of Christ, is absolutely necessary to their comfortably walking together in church fellowship, and the more honourable carrying on the worship of God

together; and which will be more manifest in the latter day, when saints shall see eye to eye: likewise an unity in affection may be here designed, a being knit together in love to each other; which is the bond of perfectness, the evidence of regeneration, the badge of the Christian profession, the beauty of church communion, and the barrier and security from the common enemy; and without which, social worship and mutual service will be either neglected or coldly performed. Moreover, this petition may have respect to the gathering together all the saints at the last day, as one body united together in faith and love; as one general assembly and church of the firstborn; as one fold of which Christ is the head, Saviour, and shepherd:

*as thou, Father, [art] in me, and I in thee.* There is a mutual in being of the Father and the Son, who are one in nature and essence, in power and will, and in understanding and affection; which union, though it infinitely transcends any kind of union among men, or that can be conceived of by men, yet is the exemplar of the saints' union one with another, and to the divine persons; and which must be understood not of an equality, but a likeness:

*that they also may be one in us:* there is an union of all the elect to God and Christ, which is already complete, and not to be prayed for; they are all loved by God with an everlasting love, by which they are inseparably one with him; they are all chosen in Christ, as members in their head, and are federally united to him, as their Mediator, surety, and representative; in consequence of which he has assumed their nature, stood in their place and stead, and brought them nigh to God. There is a manifestation of union in conversion, when persons openly appear to be in Christ; and as a fruit and effect of everlasting love, are with loving kindness drawn unto him; and which will be more gloriously seen, when all the elect shall be brought in, and God shall be all in all, and is what Christ here prays for:

*that the world may believe that thou hast sent me;* either the rest of God's chosen people in the world, not yet called; or rather the wicked and reprobate part of the world, particularly Jews and Deists: they shall see the concord and agreement of the saints in doctrine, worship, and affection in the latter day; and when all the elect shall be gathered together, and not only their union to each other, but to the divine persons, shall clearly appear; they will then believe, and be obliged to own, that Jesus is the true Messiah, was sent of God, and is no imposter.

**Ver. 22.** *And the glory which thou gavest me*, etc.] Not the glory of his deity; this is the same with his Father, what he has in right of nature, and not by gift; nor can it be communicated to creatures; this would be to make them one in the Godhead, as the three are one, which is not the design of the expression in the close of the verse: nor his mediatorial glory, which he had with the Father before the world began; this indeed was given him by the Father, but is not given to the saints: nor the glory, of working miracles; which glory Christ had, and which, as man, he had from the Father, and in which his own glory was manifested; this he gave to his disciples; but all that are his have not had it, and some have had it who are none of his: rather the Gospel is meant, which is glorious in its author, matter and subject, in its doctrines, in the blessing: grace it reveals, and promises it contains, and in the efficacy and usefulness of it to the souls of men. This was given to Christ, and he gave it to his disciples:

*I have given them*; as he did the words that were given to him, (<sup>487B</sup>John 17:8),

*that they may be one, even as we are one*; for the Gospel was given to the apostles, and still is to the ministers of it, to bring men to the unity of the faith, for the perfecting of the saints, and the edifying of the body of Christ: or else the fulness both of grace and glory, which is in Christ's hands for his people, is here designed. This is one considerable branch of the glory of Christ, as Mediator, to be full of grace and truth; this was given him by the Father, and is what he communicates to his; even the Spirit, and all sorts of grace, and every supply of it; and which greatly contributes to the union of the saints among themselves: yea, eternal happiness is often signified by glory; and this is given to Christ; he has it in his hands to give to others; and he does give it, a view of it, a right unto it, a meetness for it, a pledge of it, some foretastes of it, and a kind of a possession of it; for the saints have it already, at least in him; and he will give them the actual enjoyment of it, and this in order to their consummate and perfect union together, as a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

**Ver. 23.** *I in them*, etc.] Christ is in his saints; not as he is in all the world, being the omnipresent God; or as he is in every man, communicating the light of nature as Creator; or as he is in the human nature, which is united to his divine person; or circumscriptively to the exclusion of him elsewhere; for he is in heaven, his blood is within the veil, and his righteousness without us: but he is in them, in a gracious manner, in regeneration; when

he is revealed to them, formed in them, enters into them, takes possession of them, communicates his grace, grants fellowship with himself, and dwells in them; not only by his Spirit and grace, but in person, as the head in the members, as the master of the house, and the King of them; which is an instance of condescending grace, and is peculiar to God's elect: hence all their holiness and fruitfulness; nor shall they ever perish; their bodies shall rise from the dead, and being reunited to their souls, Christ will be in them in a glorious manner to all eternity:

*and thou in me*; the Father is in Christ, not only by union of nature, nor merely in him, as Mediator, in a way of grace; but as he will show himself in and through him in glory for evermore, and is what is here prayed for:

*that they may be made perfect in one*; this regards not their justification, which is already perfect; nor their sanctification, which will be; but either perfection in glory, when they will be perfect in knowledge, in holiness, in peace, joy and love: or rather the perfection of their numbers is meant, when the whole election of grace will be completed in regeneration, sanctification, and glorification:

*and that the world may know that thou hast sent me*: as before; (see Gill on “~~John~~ John 17:21”);

*and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me*. The Oriental versions, the Syriac, Arabic, Persic, and Ethiopic, all read the words thus, “and I have loved them, as thou hast loved me”; contrary to all the Greek copies, and other versions, which read as we do. The Father loved Christ as his own Son, and as Mediator; so he loved him when he assumed human nature, and became obedient to his will both in doing and suffering; when his Father left him, and poured out his wrath upon him, and when he laid down his life for the sheep. The instances of his love to him as Mediator are, his putting all things into his hands, showing him all that he does, and concealing nothing from him, and appointing him the only Saviour, the head of the church, and Judge of the world. The nature of this love is, that it is from eternity; is a love of complacency and delight; it is special and peculiar, unchangeable and inseparable, and will last for ever: now God has loved his people, as he has loved his Son; he loves them not merely as creatures, as the descendants of Adam, or as considered in themselves, but as in Christ. The instances of his love to them are, his choosing them in Christ; making a covenant with them in him; the mission of him into this world, to obtain salvation for them; the quickening and calling of them by

his grace; the care he takes of them afterwards in supplying their wants, supporting them under temptations, delivering them out of afflictions, and causing all things to work together for their good; to all which add the provisions he makes for them, both for time and eternity. The nature of this love is such as that he bears to Christ; it is from everlasting; a love of the utmost delight and pleasure; it is special and peculiar, unchangeable, and will continue for ever: there is not the same reason for his loving them as his Son; and this as must not be thought to denote equality, but similitude and order.

**Ver. 24.** *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me*, etc.] Not all the world, but a select number; not apostles only, nor as such; nor believers, or as such, for as such they were not given to Christ; nor as considered in the effectual calling; but as the elect of God, and by that eternal act of his grace; when they were given to Christ as his children, as his spouse, as his church, as the sheep of his hand, as his portion, and to be preserved by him; which is known by their calling and conversion: the form in which these words are delivered, is not so much by way of entreaty, as demand; they are a declaration of Christ's will, in which he insists on it as his right, upon the foot of his purchase, and those covenant transactions which passed between him and his Father, on the behalf of those that were given to him: that they

*be with me where I am*; not where he was then, unless it may be meant of him as the omnipresent God, and as such then in heaven; though he rather designs where he should be as man, after his resurrection, and where the souls of saints are after death; and where they will be, soul and body, when raised again; and which is desirable both to Christ, and to his people; this was the joy that was set before him, and what they comfort one another with, that they shall be for ever with him:

*that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me*; not the simple abstract glory of his deity; which, as it was not given to him, is not to be seen by them; but his glory as Mediator: this was seen, though imperfectly by some, in the days of his flesh; and in the glass of the Gospel, a believer now has some views of it, and by faith sees, knows, and is assured that Christ is glorified in heaven; but hereafter the saints in their own persons, and with their own eyes, shall see him as he is, and appear in glory with him; which sight of his glory will be near, and not at a distance, appropriating and assimilating, rejoicing, satisfying, and for ever:

*for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world;* this is mentioned both as a reason why such a glory was given him, because of his Father's early love to him as Mediator; and as an argument why he might expect to be heard and answered, because of the interest he had in his affections, which had been strongly towards him, even from everlasting; and because the persons he asks, or rather demands these things for, shared in the same ancient love.

**Ver. 25.** *O righteous Father,* etc.] God is righteous in all the divine persons: the Father is righteous, the Son is righteous, and the Holy Spirit is righteous: he is so in his nature; righteousness is a perfection of it; he is so in all his purposes and promises; in all his ways and works of providence and grace; in predestination, redemption, justification, pardon of sin, and eternal glory. Christ makes use of this epithet, as containing a reason why he might justly expect that all his petitions and claims, on behalf of himself and people, would be regarded:

*the world hath not known thee;* the unbelieving Jews, and idolatrous Gentiles, wicked men, one or another, know not God: as not the Father, so neither the Son, nor Spirit; though deity may be known by them, or that there is a God, yet they know not God in Christ, nor as the Father of Christ, or as their Father in him, nor what it is to have communion with him; nor do they know any of the things of God in a spiritual way; which shows the darkness and blindness of men by nature, the necessity of a divine illumination, and the miserable state of men without one:

*but I have known thee;* his nature, perfections and glory, his secret thoughts, purposes and designs, his covenant, promises and blessings, his love, grace and good will to his people, his whole mind and will; as he needs must, since he was one with him, and lay in his bosom;

*and these have known that thou hast sent me;* meaning his disciples and apostles, whom he distinguishes from the world; these knew the Father that sent him, and that he was sent by the Father; they knew the love of the Father in sending of him, the manner in which he was sent, and the end, man's redemption, for which he was sent; and acknowledged all this, and which laid them under an obligation to trust in him, love him, and magnify his grace; and is used by Christ as an argument with the Father to be concerned for them.

**Ver. 26.** *And I have declared unto them thy name*, etc.] Himself, his nature, his perfections, especially of grace and mercy, his mind and will, his Gospel; (see Gill on “~~John~~ John 17:6”). A very fit person Christ was to make this declaration, since he was with him from all eternity, and was in his bosom; the Father did all in him, and his name is in him; and he is the faithful witness; nor is anything of God to be known savingly, but in and through Christ; the apostles are here particularly meant, though the same is true with respect to all that are given to Christ, who are his children and brethren, to whom he also declares the name of God:

*and will declare it*; more fully to them after his resurrection, during his forty days’ stay with them, and upon his ascension, when he poured down his Spirit in such a plentiful and extraordinary manner upon them; and will declare it to others besides them in the Gentile world; and still more in the latter day glory, and to all believers more and more:

*that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them*; that is, that a sense of that love with which God loves his Son, as Mediator, might be in them and abide in them, and which is the rather mentioned because they are loved by the Father with the same love, and share all the blessed consequences of it, the knowledge and sense of which they come at, through Christ’s declaring his Father’s name unto them; and which they will have a greater sense of, and will be swallowed up in it in heaven to all eternity:

*and I in them*; dwelling in them, taking up his residence in them; not only by his Spirit and grace here, but by his glorious presence with them hereafter; when they shall be brought to his Father’s house, behold his glory, and be for ever with him.