

Notes & References

Jesus Prays for His Disciples
John 17:6-19

April 2, 2017

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^A Luke 10:1, 17; 1 Corinthians 15:6

^B Mark 10:40-41

A. "Jesus' High-Priestly Prayer"

1. or, "Jesus' Prayer of Consecration"

a. the first title credited to a Lutheran theologian, David Chytraeus (1530-1600)

b. the second by anonymous others

c. it was spoken

(A) either in the upper room as they were about to leave it

(B) but more likely as they were on the way to Gethsemane

(C) and the agonizing prayers there came later

d. **We are privileged to listen in to the Lord Jesus praying to His Father. Bengel, the great Bible teacher, said, "Of all the chapters in the Word, this is the simplest in word, and the profoundest in thought. Here only is the full text of His intercession for His own."** —{2}.

2. Having three parts

a. prayer for Himself (verses 1-5)

b. prayer for His disciples (verses 6-19, which we shall study today)

c. prayer for His church (verse 20-26)

B. Who were these disciples?

1. The eleven are most obviously at the forefront

a. that this is the case is made particularly evident in verse 12 – "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled." (John 17:12)

(A) in this verse, Judas Iscariot is held out in contrast to the eleven

(B) it is also emphasised here, that the disciples primarily in view are those with whom Jesus has been keeping company over the days of his ministry, as well as keeping them spiritually

b. it is also shown in a number of requests to the Father which continued what He has been saying to them in the upper room

(A) that they may have His joy fulfilled in them (verse 13):

(1) "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."
(John 15:11)

(2) "Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full." (John 16:24)

(B) that these are sent into the world (v 18), the commission given first specifically to the eleven: the apostles
– "Those sent"

2. The larger body of followers

a. but these eleven were not alone as being Christ's disciples

(A) there were those who followed Jesus through parts of His ministry

(B) such as Lazarus, for whom Jesus had a special affection (11:5)

(C) or the seventy men that he sent out at one time with the gospel message (Luke 10:1, 17)

b. and Paul recounts in 1 Corinthians 15:6, "After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, ..."

c. so the words, "the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world" of verse 6, include many more than just the eleven apostles

3. The women supporters

a. in fact, the words "the men" in that verse 6 include more than just men – what's that, you say? how's that, you ask?

b. well there are two words in Greek meaning man or men; one means those who are males; but the one used here, anthropos, means man as mankind – so verse 6 means "the people you gave Me"

c. and women were an important part of that group

d. when nearly all the apostles had fled when Christ was crucified, what do we read? "40 And there were also some women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome. 41 And when He was in Galilee, they used to follow Him and minister to Him; and there were many other women who had come up with Him to Jerusalem." (Mark 15:40-41)

e. and it was that Magdalene who first came and told the disciples of the stone rolled away on resurrection day, as well as the first to see Jesus

4. The "secret Christians"

a. they had been too fearful to give public support to Jesus

b. but at the most difficult time, when Jesus had been put to death

c. these two rulers, who had not consented to Jesus' execution, came and took the body of Jesus to bury it

d. for all these whom God the Father had given to Him, Jesus now prays

C. Disciples as God's possession

1. "Given"

- a. when we came to this chapter we noted that the word, "given", is used seventeen times in this chapter, and in thirteen instances it is of the Father giving to the Son
- b. the time-stamp of this word is something that has taken place in the past but whose result continues on until the present time
- c. and one of the gifts of the Father to the Son is His disciples

2. Examples

- a. v 2: '*... that to all whom Thou hast given Him, He may give eternal life.*'
- b. v 6: '*... the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, ...*'
- c. v 9: '*I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine*'
- d. and in its largest sense in v 10: '*and all things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I have been glorified in them.*'

3. Implication

- a. there is a matter here that is beyond our capacity to understand and yet is of the greatest comfort to believers: that even before they came to faith, they had been marked out in a special way as God's
- b. J. Vernon McGee says on this these verses: '*We are back to the great doctrine of election. Jesus talked to the Father about it. It was a private conversation, but He wanted the disciples to hear it and to know about it. I don't know as much about election as maybe I should know about it. I've read Hodge, Calvin, Thornwall, Shedd, and Strong on the subject, and they don't seem to know much more about it. The reason we know so little about election is because it is God's side and there are a lot of things that God knows that we don't know.*'^{3}. Elsewhere he says, '*I wish you could have met me when I graduated from seminary. I was a smart boy then and I even had the answer to election and free will. But I have a little more sense than I had then, and I realize that we simply do not understand it.*'^{4}.
- c. perhaps it is just best to leave this with Paul's words on the subject: "*just as He (God) chose us in Him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless ...*" (Ephesians 1:4a)

D. Disciples as "extra-terrestrials"

1. "World"

- a. this chapter has a lot to say about the 'world' – 14 verse, and in some the word is used more than once
- b. let us make clear that this word, kosmos, or world is used in two different ways; each being in contrast to heaven
 - (A) it sometimes is simply talking the physical earth
 - (B) in others it means that part of mankind who perpetually reject God and His Christ

2. Disciples and the World

- a. verse 6, disciples are those "... whom Thou gavest Me out of the world; Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me, ..."
 - (A) the first time the phrase "out of the world" is used in carries with it the idea of separation; the Fathers giving is described in Colossians 1:13, 'For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,'
 - (B) that same phrase "out of the world" (literally in the Greek) is used again in verses 14 and 16 where Jesus says these disciples are "not out of the world" – how can that be? ... simply, that once they have become children of God, have departed from Satan's rule into Christ's rule, their spiritual state has once and for ever changed – in that sense of the word, they can never leave it again
 - (C) "... the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:14) – they don't belong
- b. yet Jesus is leaving this earth, and His disciples remain upon this earth, and for this situation He prays to the Father
 - (A) verse 11: "And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are."
 - (1) asking that they be kept (we shall return to this)
 - (2) asking that they know the unity corresponding to the unity that exists in the Trinity (to be examined next week, D.V.)
 - (B) Their remaining is purposeful and pertinent, parallel to the Son's incarnation
 - (1) v 15: "I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, ..."
 - (2) v 18: "As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world."
- c. just a few brief notes about some other requests Jesus makes on behalf of His disciples

E. Disciples as trainees

1. Their training

a. v 6: "I manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou gavest Me ..."

(A) in the Bible, God's name stands for all He is: His character; His Nature – Jesus Christ was the personal message of that Name – in Himself, He is the One who reveals God

(B) "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." (John 1:18)

b. v 8: "for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; ..."

(A) The incomparable words that Jesus spoke, as never did any man, came directly from God the Father and at His command

(B) "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak." (John 12:49)

2. The result

a. v 6: "... and they have kept Thy word."

(A) "Thy word," said the Psalmist (119:11), "have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee."

(B) keeping God's word means

(1) making it part of your being

(2) applying it to your living

b. v 8: "... and they received them, and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me."

(A) there was a three-fold response of disciples to Jesus' teaching

(1) first, was the attention that they paid to it

(2) then, by questioning Him, they came to an understanding as to His Divine Origin

(3) finally, there came the belief, that whereby they would entrust themselves to Christ on the basis of what they heard

(B) 'And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" (Matthew 16:16)

F. Disciples as God's kept ones

1. Jesus had kept them while He was with them (which was particularly the eleven) – "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled." (John 17:12)

- a. like the good shepherd He is, He continually watched over His sheep
- b. moreover, by His words and Person he erected a place of safety around them, a hedge of protection
- c. that protection was the Name given to Him by the Father: Saviour
- d. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous runs into it and is safe." (Proverbs 18:10)
- e. William Hendriksen paraphrases this verse: "And I guarded them, and not one of them perished. But the son of perdition did perish. However, far from proving that in this one instance the plan from eternity was defeated and prophecy left unfulfilled, this happened in order that scripture might be fulfilled."—{5}.

2. Jesus' prayer that they be kept

- a. Because no long will He be bodily present to do so, verse 11: "And I am no more in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are."
- b. Because they are on a mission in the enemy's territory: "I do not ask Thee to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one."

G. Conclusion

1. some reminders

- a. we who are believers, are the Father's possession, whom He has given to the Son – what a great privilege and assurance
- b. though we live in this world, we now belong to Jesus, and we are left here according to His pleasure to carry out His commission
- c. that a part of our being disciples is our continued learning from the teaching of the Master
- d. we need to place our lives in God's hands if we are to be kept true –
- e. "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy," (Jude 1:24)

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ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

- Bruce – The Gospel & Epistles of John, by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
- BM – Biblical Museum, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
- NICNT – The New International Commentary on the New Testament
The Gospel according to John, by Leon Morris
- NTC – New Testament Commentary, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
- RWP – Robertson's Word Pictures of the New Testament, by Dr. A. T. Robertson
- TTBC – Thru the Bible Commentary Series, by J. Vernon McGee; John 11-21; Thomas Nelson Publishers; 1991

2. *'Plug into Power,'* by Dr John M. Moore; © 1996 by the author; publisher unknown
3. TTBC, *in loc.*, page 125
4. TTBC, *in loc.*, page 127
5. NTC, *in loc.*