

The Gospel of John

Chapter 17:1-5

November 16, 1997

- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

- - Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
 - Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
 - Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
 - Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
 - Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
 - Chapter 6 The Bread of Life
 - Chapter 7 The public debates about Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles
 - Chapter 8 Public debates: Woman caught in adultery; The Son makes you free; Abraham's true children
 - Chapter 9 Jesus heals a man born blind.
 - Chapter 10 Jesus is the Door and the True Shepherd
 - Chapter 11 Our Lord is the Resurrection and the Life
 - Chapter 12 Jesus Anointed and Worshipped as King, God softens some and hardens some, Public ministry ends
 - Chapter 13 Jesus Loves His Disciples, Judas Betrays The Master
 - Chapter 14 The Way, The Truth and The Life
 - Chapter 15 Jesus is the True Vine
 - Chapter 16 The Spirit will guide into all truth
 - Chapter 17 The Glory of God, and the Unity and Perseverance of Believers

- **Review and Introduction**

Jesus has been giving His disciples some final instruction before His arrest. They left the upper room and are apparently proceeding to the garden which they reach at the beginning of chapter 18. He has instructed them to be unified, to expect persecution, to ask anything of the Father in the name of the Son and to remain in the True Vine.

This section, where John records Jesus' prayer, is easily understood in three parts: His prayer for Himself, His prayer for the disciples and His prayer for all those who believe in His name. We also see that the content of the prayer has three themes; glory, unity and perseverance of the faithful.

The first theme of glory is the focus of this section, but what exactly is glory? It is such a familiar word yet we rarely ask ourselves what the word means. The word translated as glory in the scriptures is centered around a Hebrew word meaning "heavy" as in heavy laden with gold or value. But the word also brings with it the idea of manifestation. The "heaviness" is declared and made evident for someone to see. The glory of God is that which manifests or declares His holiness. The holiness of God is the confluence of all His divine attributes. Just as white light contains all colors of the spectrum, so too God's holiness is composed of all of His attributes (wrath, love, purity, mercy, faithfulness, truth, beauty, wisdom, etc.). Christ is the effulgence of God's holiness.

Exposition of John 17:1-5

- ● *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,*

- - Again Jesus gives us the example of praying to the Father. He apparently prays these things in the presence of the disciples for their benefit and ours so that John could record what Jesus said. The first thing that Jesus declares before the Father is that "...the hour has come." This reminds us of all the times that our Lord had said previously that His time had not yet come, the first time being at the wedding feast at Cana.
 - Christ prays that the Father would glorify His Son. When the Word became flesh and became the man, Jesus, some amount of His glory was set aside. It was truly a "coming down" for the Word to be clothed in flesh but we know that He did so to suffer and die and make atonement for the world. Here when Christ prays to be glorified though, He is not

asking that the incarnation be reversed rather He is praying that the Father would declare to the world that He is the Son of God with irrefutable proof.

- The one whom the Father would glorify is the faithful one, Jesus Christ. The father would glorify the Son and the Son by His obedience, even to death on the cross, would bring glory to the Father.

● ● ² *"as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.*

- Christ has been given all authority in heaven and earth (just flesh is mentioned here) so that He might save those whom the Father has given to Him. This concept in this chapter will first be applied to the disciples and then be applied to all who believe. If Jesus raises up someone on the last day it is because the Father has given that person to Christ.
- The Word was made flesh in the form of Jesus of Nazareth. This Jesus has been given authority over all things including powers and principalities, flesh and even death. This authority has been vested in Him so that He might raise up those whom the Father has elected. Note that the most important attribute of eternal life is not that it is *eternal* but that it is *life* eternal as opposed to *death* eternal. Those who are outside of Christ will also exist for eternity but that existence will be likened unto eternal death with no joy, peace, truth or hope.
- Here we plainly see limited atonement. The atonement of Christ is limited not in its ability to fully save but rather in the extent to which that salvation is applied. Every Christian believes in limited atonement. The problem is that the Arminian position declares that the effect of the atonement is limited and the Calvinist believes that the extent of the atonement is limited. We can see from this verse that the benefits of the atonement are only applied to those whom the Father chooses or elects to give to the Son.

● ● ³ *"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

- We come to the Father through the Son by means of the Spirit. Here Jesus explains that knowing God comes through knowing Christ, the Sent One. We also know that what matters is not that *we know* God but rather that *we are known by God*. If God knows us, we shall know Him. But just as there will be those who in the final days claim to know God, He declares to them that they should depart because He has never known them.

● ● ⁴ *"I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.*

- Jesus declares that He has completed the work of manifesting the glory of the Father on earth. Notice that the obedience of Christ brought about the declared glory of the Father. In all ways, Christ succeeded (even in the obedience on the cross) in the works the Father prepared for Him. By doing this, Jesus perfectly made evident the holiness of God.

● ● ⁵ *"And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.* NKJV

- Now Jesus prays that the Father would glorify the Son who has glorified the Father. We can see the perfect united purpose of the Godhead in the manifestation of God's holiness.
- We are not exactly holy in the same way that the Father is holy. Although we are commanded to be holy as [surely] as He is, God is not being sanctified as we are. We who are in Christ have been cleansed and made holy. God has not been cleansed or made holy, He is purity and He is holiness. We don't understand God by means of these words, we understand these words by means of God.
- It is beautiful to see that Christ prays that His glory would be restored to the glory that existed from eternity past. Notice very carefully that the glory of God existed before the creation. Although He created all things for His own glory (Small Children's Catechism question #3) the glory of God did not depend on this creation but was expanded and manifested further by it. Before the creation, God's glory was manifest *in Himself to Himself*.