

***JESUS PRAYS FOR HIMSELF***

***17:1" Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You,***

***17:2 even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life."***

"These things" refers to the entire discourse beginning from 14:1; these words clearly tie chapter 17 to the preceding scene.

Jesus' prayer begins by recognizing the sovereignty of God: "the hour has come." "The hour" is the time predetermined by God when Jesus suffers and dies and which ultimately leads to His glorification. It is a technical term used throughout the book of John. In 2:4, 7:30, and 8:20 Jesus said, "The hour has not yet come." Now He speaks of His hour as having arrived (12:23; 13:1 [cf. 13:31-32]). Even though the hour is set and will take place, Jesus does not view God's sovereignty as fatalism; it is *because* the hour has come that Jesus prays. As Carson says, "Jesus prays that His Father will accomplish the purpose of this appointed hour. As so often in Scripture, emphasis on God's sovereignty functions as an incentive to prayer, not a disincentive" (Carson, 553).

At the time of death, Jesus' primary concern was that He glorifies the Father by means of the cross (17:1, 4, 6, 10; 12:28; 21:19): "the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You." "If we consider what follows to the end, all the rest that is said in the prayer seems to be but an amplification of this great request" (Edwards; see notes on verse 5 for more discussion of "glory").

The Father is glorified through the Son, but how is the Son glorified in the cross? First of all, He is glorified on the cross because through it, He provided eternal life. Jesus would be given all authority after He died and rose from the dead. Thus, verse 2 is prophetic, looking at this as already having transpired. In this case, His authority is for the express purpose of giving eternal life, but elsewhere in Scripture, His authority extends to everything in creation.

Ephesians 1:20-22 says that God "raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church." Likewise, Philippians 2:9-11 tells us that "God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." In Matthew 28:18 Jesus said, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." Also see Daniel 7:13-14 and Isaiah 9:6-7.

## Hodge comments:

The divine authority of Christ is manifest in the control which He claimed over all his people and over all creatures. All power was and is in his hands. His ministers are under his direction; He sends one here and another there. All Paul's labors and journeyings were performed under his continued guidance. This is but an illustration of the universal and absolute control which He constantly exercises over the whole universe. The angels in heaven are his messengers, and the course of human history, as well as the circumstances of every individual man, is determined by Him. So also is the eternal destiny of all men in his hands. I will reward every man, He says, according to his works. (Matt. xvi. 27, and Rev. xxii. 12.) "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. vii. 22, 23.) In the last day, at the "time of harvest, I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." (Matt. xiii. 30.) And in ver. 41, "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." The king in that day will say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:" for "inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me." It is the attitude, therefore, in which men stand to Christ (provided they have heard his name), which is to determine their destiny in the last day. Sinning against Christ, denying or rejecting Him, is denying or rejecting God. Our Lord therefore uniformly places Himself in the relation of God to the souls of men, claiming the same authority over them, the same right to decide their destiny, and representing all sin as committed against Himself. Thus also He says, that it were better for a man to have a millstone hung about his neck and he cast into the midst of the sea, than to offend one of the little ones who believe on Him. "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the angels of God." (Luke xii. 8, 9.) "He that loveth father or mother . . . son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Such supreme love is due to God alone, and Christ in claiming this love from us, places Himself before us as God. (Hodge, Systematic Theology, I, 501-502).

In 17:2 Jesus' authority to give life only extends to those whom the Father "has given" to Him (17:6, 9, 24).

On several occasions in John's Gospel, divine election is described in terms of God the Father giving certain persons to God the Son (6:37, 39; 10:29; 17:1-2, 6, 9, 24). In each of these cases the giving of men to Christ precedes and is the cause of their receiving eternal life. Those who are given to the Son include not only the present company of disciples who believe in Jesus, but also the elect of future ages who will come to faith through the gospel. Jesus looks upon them as already His (John 17:20-21; see also John 10:16; Acts 18:10), even though they have not yet

believed in His name. They are His because they were given to Him by the Father in eternity past (Storms, "Election Texts " II ; [www.samstorms.com](http://www.samstorms.com)).

Jesus is the mediator for the Father; He gives life to those whom the Father gives Him. Christ mediates for the Father in other areas as well. For example, the Bible says that God created all things *through* Him. Hebrews 1:2 says it was *through* Him that God made the world. Likewise, John 1:3 tells us "All things came into being *through* Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." By saying that all things were made "through Him" (not "by Him;" see Jn. 1:10 also), John reaffirms the truth that the Father is the source of all that exists, but the Word is the medium through which God the Father expresses Himself in creation. The Bible maintains a careful distinction between the roles of the Father and the Son (I Cor. 8:6). Creation involves both the work of the Father and the Son. Here, in a similar way, Jesus is the one who represents the Father to man. He is the God-sent Messiah, God's anointed One, who alone mediates eternal life to man.

***17:3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."***

Verse 3 gives somewhat of a definition of what eternal life is: eternal life is knowing God. Of course, this is not just cognitive knowledge about God; it involves having fellowship, trust, and a personal relationship with Him.

Because God is supremely revealed in the Son, no knowledge of God can exist apart from knowing Christ.

"An integral element of the promised new covenant is that all of God's new covenant people, from the least to the greatest, would know Him personally, and without an intermediary so typical of the old covenant relationships (Jer. 31:34; Heb. 8:11). God's people are destroyed from lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6); conversely Habakkuk foresees a time when 'the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea' (Hab.2:14). We are to 'acknowledge Him' (lit. 'know him'), and 'He will direct our paths' (Prov. 3:6); 'the Lord is your life' (Deut. 30:20). To know God is to be transformed, and thus to be introduced to a life that could not otherwise be experienced" (Carson 556).

***17:4 "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do."***

***17:5 Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was."***

At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work" (Jn. 4:34). Now in 17:4 Jesus looks back over the entirety of His ministry and sees it as complete and as something that glorified God. By faith, He also anticipates a successful completion of His mission at the cross, for that is the most important work He will accomplish (Carson, 557). "The supreme place of the Father is guarded with the expression 'given.' Even the work which Jesus did was the work which the Father gave Him" (Morris, 721; cf. 17:2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 22, 24 [2X]). This is the second way that Jesus is glorified through the cross. The cross consummates a life of perfect obedience.

The third way that Christ is glorified by the cross is in verse 5. It was through the cross that He was restored to the glory He enjoyed before the incarnation.

Glory can refer to power, splendor, or honor. These words are related in that power and splendor usually bring honor and renown. Power and splendor "are often the outward manifestation and even the cause of being honored. Thus the meanings often merge into one another" (TDNT II, 243). Sam Storms defines glory as follows: "The term 'glory' refers to the visible splendor or moral beauty of God's manifold perfections. The 'glory' of God is the exhibition of his inherent excellence; it is the external manifestation of his internal majesty. To 'glorify God' is to declare, draw attention to, or publicly announce and advertise his glory" (Sam Storms, *Enjoying God Ministries*).

When Jesus said, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do," it means that everything Jesus did on earth brought the Father honor. Jesus exhibited God's excellence; His actions declared God's fame. In 17:2 the giving of eternal life to men is the outworking of the glory of which Christ speaks (Morris, 718).

Since God does not share His glory with another (Isa. 42:8; 48:11), the NT takes a huge step when it relates glory (which is reserved for God) to Jesus. The glory of God the Father is linked to Jesus' glory in John 1:14 where John proclaims, "and beheld His (Jesus') glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Turning water into wine was said to be a manifestation of His (Jesus') glory (Jn. 2:11). Raising Lazarus from the dead was "for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it" (Jn. 11:4). In 17:1 Jesus prayed for His own glorification not as an end in itself, but as a means of greater glory to the Father (Morris, 718, n. 5). God's glory and the Son's glory are one, and the conclusion must be that the two are therefore equal.

The glory Jesus prays for is the glory that He possessed "before the world was" (17:5), an expression that alludes back to the words in the prologue of John (Jn. 1:1, 14). This assumes Christ's pre-existence and prior possession of glory, as well as a forfeiture of His glory in becoming man. A relevant passage is Philippians 2.

In Philippians 2:6-8 Paul says that Jesus existed in *the form of God*, but "emptied Himself" (gave up all His rights" as God) and took *the form of a bond-servant*. "Form" in Greek included *external appearance*, but also referred to *the essential nature and attributes* of the thing. "Form," in a word, is equivalent to our phrase "specific character" (BB Warfield). In other words, something said to be in the form of man would possess all the characteristics and inner nature of a human. In essence, it would be human. Jesus was said to exist in the form of God and therefore possessed both the outward appearance and inward essence of God. He who is "in the form of God" is God. But this divine person took the form of man (He clothed Himself in man's nature), and though His essence remained unchanged (He was still God by nature), the outward manifestation of His glory was veiled. It is through the cross that He returned to the position and splendor He once had. In Philippians this is expressed in 2:9-11: "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the

name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

To summarize, when Jesus existed in the form of God, He possessed glory (honor, fame, renown). When He became man, He entered into a state of humility where His glory was hidden. After the resurrection God exalted Him (the God/man). This exaltation resulted in glory to God the Father (Jn. 17:1; Phil. 2:11).

However, it is important to see that the paradox that John presents in His gospel is “that the true glory is to be seen, not in outward splendor, but in the lowliness with which the Son of God lived for men and suffered for them” (12:23ff; 13:31; Morris, 104-105). “Jesus showed forth His glory not *in spite* of His earthly humiliations, but precisely *by means of* those humiliations. Supremely, this is the case with the cross. To the outward eye this was the uttermost in degradation, the death of a felon. To the eye of faith it was (and is) the supreme glory” (Morris, 226; Jn. 12:28). To men, the cross appeared an instrument of shame. But to Christ, it was the moment of supreme glory. And so Jesus, looking at the cross says, “The hour has come. Glorify Thy Son.” In speaking of His looming death Jesus said in John 13:31-32, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him; if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.” The cross is the ultimate display of God’s glory because God, “being what He is, stooped to a position where men might and did reject Him” (Morris, 605).

There is nothing that could declare God’s greatness more than this ultimate act of humiliation and self-sacrifice; there is no greater demonstration of love (Ro. 5:8) or grace (Eph. 1:7); there is no more magnificent display of wisdom (Ro.11:33), for at the cross God satisfied the demands of His righteousness (Ro. 3:25), provided a means by which the sinner could be forgiven, brought reconciliation to the hostility that exists between God and man and defeated the powers of darkness. It is the extreme display of His excellence, the most spectacular exhibition of God’s majesty. It is the greatest reason to honor God and “proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light” (I Pet. 2:9).