

Exegesis

Vs. 6-8 – Jesus moves from praying for *himself* to praying for his *present* disciples. However, the actual petition does not occur until vs. 11. Before the Lord makes his request for the disciples, he presents his *reasoning*. We must understand the *rationale* undergirding Jesus' appeal; otherwise, his requests will seem trivial. Jesus says, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."

Referring to the apostles as "the men which thou gavest me out of the world" shows that Jesus' followers were, at one point, "of the world." The disciples were lost men. They were enemies of God—that is until they were given to Jesus by God (cf. 3:27).¹ This does not negate the disciples' obedience; they are to be praised for heeding God's call. But clearly, they did not choose Christ; it was God who guided them and Christ who hand-picked them "out the world" (cf. 6:70; 15:16) to be his representatives to the world (cf. 15:27).²

In the modern era, a person's name is only a *part* of their identity, while in the ancient world, it represents a person as a *whole* (see notes 16:24).³ So, in asserting that he has "manifested [God's] name" unto his followers, the Lord is saying that he's *revealed* the sum total of the Godhead (cf. Heb. 1:1-2).⁴ There is no greater revelation of God than the one found in and through Jesus Christ (cf. 1:18; 8:19, 27; 10:38; 12:45). YHWH had revealed his name in the past. However, as Klink points out, this time, "It is not a burning bush (Ex. 3) but God himself who has now declared and defined his true identity in the Son."⁵ So complete was the Son's disclosure of the Father that, practically speaking, to know one is to know the other (cf. 14:8-9), and that kind of knowledge is eternal life itself (cf. vs. 3). Therefore, the temple is no longer the meeting place of God (cf. Deut. 12:5, 11); now his name can *only* be known through his Son.⁶ Jesus, not Jerusalem, is where "true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (4:23).

¹ On the phrase "gavest me," see notes vs. 2.

² On "gavest them me," see notes on 17:2.

³ Morris (1995), p. 640.

⁴ Carson (1991), p. 558, "God's 'name' embodies his character; to reveal God's name is to make God's character known."

⁵ Klink (2016), p. 715.

⁶ Köstenberger (2008), p. 491.

Unlike the world, Jesus says the Eleven "have kept [God's] word." What little the disciples could grasp during that pre-resurrection period, they held on to as one might take hold of a lifebuoy to keep from drowning. Though they had yet to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, they obeyed God's instruction as presented by Jesus Christ (cf. 15:3).⁷ Flawed, they were, but compared to the world, there is far more to *praise* than condemn when it comes to the apostles. Though their courage will eventually fail them, we cannot forget how they stuck by Jesus when several others did not (cf. 6:66-67), even though, in doing so, they put themselves in harm's way (cf. 11:6; 13:37).

Moreover, Jesus said the apostles recognized that "all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them..." Since he was entirely dependent on his Father for everything, Jesus could not claim ownership over anything. The content of his lessons, even the specific verbiage he used,⁸ was all the product of God's revelation and not the result of his own contemplation.⁹ Everything the Lord said came directly from God (cf. 7:16-17; 8:28, 38, 40; 12:49-50). The disciples knew that better than anyone else, and because of that, they "received" Christ's word as if it were God's.

Furthermore, the Eleven also discerned that the Lord "came out from [God], and they have believed that [the Father] didst send [the Son]." Throughout this prayer, Jesus reiterates that he was sent from God *six* times: vs. 3, 8, 18, 21, 23, 25. God cannot be known apart from Jesus, and Jesus cannot be understood apart from God. Admittedly, there was a lot that the apostles did not yet understand, but they "believed" at least one thing with the utmost certainty: *Jesus came from heaven* (cf. 16:30).¹⁰ Like the man who was healed of his blindness, they knew that if Jesus was "not of God, he could do nothing" (9:33). But because the disciples recognized that the Lord "came out" from God, they assumed that Jesus could do *everything* (cf. Lu. 18:27).

Vs. 9-10 – The Lord says, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." The "world" is not the focus of this prayer, but the apostles. This is not to say that

⁷ Carson (1991), p. 559, "In this context, the proper comparison is not between the faith-status of the disciples *before* the resurrection and the faith-status of the disciples *after* the resurrection, but between the belief and obedience of the *disciples before* the resurrection and the unbelief and disobedience of the *world before* the resurrection."

⁸ Carson (1991), p. 560, "Here *words* renders the Greek *rhemata*, neither Jesus' teaching as a whole nor his itemized precepts, but his actual 'words' or his 'utterances'. These were given to Jesus by God; the Son says only what the Father gives him to say."

⁹ Klink (2016), p. 715, "The work of the Son has always been the work of the Father—the work of God."

¹⁰ Kruse (2017), p. 396.

Jesus did not care for the world. His death proved he cared a great deal for non-believers (cf. 3:16-17; 4:42; 12:47). But his prayer for the disciples is built upon the foundation of *obedience*.¹¹ Again, unlike the world, the Eleven have "kept [God's] word" (vs. 6). And because the world has disobeyed, Jesus will not pray for them, save, perhaps, that they would repent and believe (vs. 20; cf. 2 Pet. 3:9). A prayer such this one which has a lot to do with being unified with God (cf. 11b, 21-23) has little benefit for those who have no interest in having a relationship with God.

Besides their submission to his word, Jesus also prays for the apostles because "they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them." The Lord views himself as a steward and, as such, he "consecrat[es] his disciples to the plan and purpose of God."¹² Disciples are not, strictly speaking, Jesus' people but *God's* people who have been put under Jesus' care and custody. Everything that the Father owns has been given to the Son, and he certainly treasures his Father's "treasured" possessions (cf. Deut. 7:6; 1 Pet. 2:9).

However much this statement showcases Jesus' stewardship, we mustn't overlook the fact that it is a staggering claim for him to say he has what God has and vice versa. To assert such a thing would be blasphemous if the Lord were not God himself. So, even as Jesus dedicates the disciples to his Father, he simultaneously dedicates them to himself.¹³

Moreover, since Jesus is divine, *he is worthy of worship*. Being the recipient of all that God has, Jesus, like God (cf. 15:8; 21:19), can say that he is "glorified in [the disciples]." When believers *obey* his commands, they *glorify* Christ; when they *submit* to his will, they *exalt* the Lord; when they *follow* him, they *promote* the Son of God. The more we resemble Jesus, the more fame Jesus receives, and rightfully so. After all, is it not the will of God that "all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father" (5:23)? And does that not occur when the Church follows in Christ's footsteps, lifting him high (cf. 12:32) and demonstrating God's love for the world through good works (cf. Mat. 5:16)?

¹¹ Carson (1991), p. 560, "Moreover, however strong the predestinarianism in vv. 2, 6, it is important to insist that the disciples accepted Jesus' words, they obeyed Jesus' 'word' (v. 6), they believed that God sent Jesus (v. 8): the accepting, the obedience, the faith is *their* accepting, *their* obedience and *their* faith, regardless of how prevenient God's grace had been in their lives."

¹² Klink (2016), p. 716.

¹³ Klink (2016), p. 717, "Jesus's disciples can be both his and the Father's simultaneously, just as God includes both the Father and the Son (cf. 1:1). The disciples are not then less than the disciples of Jesus but more, for they also are the children of God.... For just as the disciples approach and have access to the Father only through the Son, so the Father assigned the Son to be the one through whom alone he would approach and have access to us. There is no need to access the Father beyond the Son or to think that God can be found by another means, for according to God's plan Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (14:6)."

Vs. 11a – “And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee.” To be clear, when the Lord says he is “no more in the world,” he is not confused about the timeline. As before (*see notes vs. 4-5*), Jesus is speaking proleptically. Which is to say, while, chronologically speaking, his departure had yet to occur, from a cosmological perspective—i.e., from the standpoint of a Being who stands outside the confines of space and time—his departure, at least for the Godhead, is already a present reality. He may be with the disciples at this moment and, yes, he will soon return to the Father; however, given Jesus' divine nature, the Lord and God were always, in some way, with one another (cf. 1:1). And so, just as he said in vs. 4 that he had “finished the work” even though the cross still loomed on the horizon, he speaks about no longer being present in the world.

Thus, the last motive given for Jesus' prayer has to do with his *departure*. Jesus' exodus is, of course, a significant theme of this section (13:31-17:26), and it should come as no surprise that it is one of the key motivations for this prayer. Jesus is leaving the world while his followers will remain “in the world.” As such, they will have to go on without Jesus' physical presence to guide them. Such an endeavor will undoubtedly prove difficult. And so, the apostles will need all the prayers they can get.

VIDEO DESCRIPTION

Deep Dive: The Gospel of John | Week 71 | John 17:6-11a

SPEAKER: Ben Hyrne, Pastor

Last week, we started to unpack Jesus' Parting Prayer. And as we saw, he begins by making a request for himself: *glorify me that I may glorify thee*. Tonight, Jesus will turn his attention from himself and start praying for his present disciples. These words will not be for the world—i.e., unbelievers—but for those who've been taken out of the world and given to the care and custody of Jesus Christ—i.e., believers. The apostles have demonstrated by their alliance with the Son of God that they are children of God. As such, before the Lord returns to the Father, he prays specifically for his followers. And it is a good thing, too, because, as the Book of Acts shows, the apostles will need all the prayers they can get.

Pastor's manuscript can be found here:

Grace Pointe Baptist Church

12029 Eastern Ave.

Baltimore, MD 21220

Contact: info@GracePointeLife.com

Website: <https://www.gracepointelife.com>

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