

# Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc.

1789 Iglehart Ave

St. Paul, MN 55104-5215

www.dtminc.org

Ph. (651) 283-0568

## **John 17:1-8 -- Jesus' High Priestly Prayer: Glorified With The Father**

Once again, the apostle John gives us a glimpse into the events of Jesus' life that are completely different than what we find in the other gospel accounts. There is no mention by the other writers of this prayer at all. Instead, they uniformly record Jesus' struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane, which will occur later (cf. 18:1). This prayer is uttered at some point after they had left the upper room (14:31), and before they crossed over from Jerusalem to the Mt. of Olives, where the garden was located (Matt. 26:30,36). Probably, Jesus paused after stepping out through the East Gate at the NE corner of the city. Having exited through the Temple courts, the city would have been immediately behind Him. As He would have surveyed the scene, the Kidron Valley lay before Him, and beyond that, on the other side, stood the Mt. of Olives. This was probably the same route He had been taking with His disciples every night, for the road to Bethany went that way, and they had been lodging on the Bethany side of the Mount, probably at the home of Lazarus, Martha, and Mary (Matt. 21:17; Mk. 11:11,12; 14:3; Lk. 21:37,38). Tonight, before beginning the descent into the valley, He lifts His eyes toward heaven and prays aloud this prayer that John alone records.

### **Notes:**

Vs. 1 - *the hour has come* -- The time has arrived. *glorify Your Son* -- The word "glorify", also translated as "praise" or "honor", means to make known the splendor, reputation, or true character of someone. The related word picture has to do with light. The glory of a candle would be the perceived radiance and warmth that it would give off. This "glory" would tell us something of the actual nature of the flame itself, though in a lesser degree. The essence is greater than the radiance that comes from it. To "glorify" the candle flame would be to hold it up for all to see, and to point out its qualities. In a similar fashion, Jesus is asking the Father to hold Him up to be seen by humankind so that His qualities and true nature might be displayed and perceived by them. *that the Son may glorify You* -- Jesus, the eternal Word in human flesh, was full of the Father's glory (1:14). His whole purpose in coming was to reveal the Father's heart and purpose toward humankind. By holding Jesus up to the spotlight, the Father was enabling Him to more fully complete His mission.

Vs. 2 - *even as* -- Literally, "according as", meaning "in proportion to", or "in accordance with". *You gave Him authority over all mankind* -- The word "gave" is a past completed action. This authority, or "legal right and power", was granted to Jesus by the Father at some point in the past. "Over all mankind" is more clear to our ears than the literal idiom, "of all/every flesh". *that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life* -- This is a purpose clause in Greek. A somewhat difficult construction, it would be best translated "in order that everything which You have given to Him, He might give (at a point in time) to them, eternal/age-type life". There is clearly a change of reference from the "all" in "all flesh" to that in "all which You have given to Him". In the latter case, John is definitely talking about a thing (or things), not people. This shifts the meaning of the verse away from God giving people to Jesus, so that He could give them eternal life. Instead, the verse seems to be communicating Jesus' intention to give His disciples the same life-dynamic He experienced, age-type life.

Vs. 3 - *And this is eternal life, that they may know You* -- The word translated as "that" here is the Greek word hina, which indicates a purpose clause, not an equivocation or definition of eternal life. In other words, Jesus is not saying, "Eternal life equals knowing God". The purpose clause says that "eternal life is in order that they might know (and be knowing) You". Age-type life is the starting point, or the open door, from which intimacy, relationship, and experience of God can be effectively pursued and discovered. Receiving eternal life is not the end or goal, rather it is the beginning of a pursuit. *the only true God* -- "True" can also mean "genuine", "dependable", or "real". There are certainly many false deities, as well as many imperfect perceptions of the God Who Is. Jesus declares that there is one genuine God, Who can be known more accurately and personally. Cf. Isa. 37:20 (the Greek in the Septuagint translation [LXX] for "alone" is the same as is translated "only" here); Ex. 34:6 (the Greek word in the LXX translated as "truth" ["faithfulness" in some

versions] is identical to that translated as "true" here.) Both of these OT passages would have been familiar creedal teachings of Judaism. Jesus combines these two concepts here. See also I Cor. 8:5,6; I Jn. 5:20,21. *and Jesus Christ whom You have sent* -- The pursuit that begins with age-type life is not just in order that we might know God, but that we might also come to experientially know and be knowing Jesus the Messiah-King. This is one of the places where the Christian faith moves beyond other religious philosophies, due to the revelation we have been given through Christ. Jesus is not just the "way to God", some sort of "gate" that we "pass through" on our way to our destination. He is Himself an aspect of that destination. He will remain part of our ongoing relationship with God. As we were told in Jn. 5:22,23, the Father has chosen to have human beings honor and value the Son even as they honor and value Him. Jesus will remain part of our future. He will be the ultimate judge of humankind. He will establish His kingdom on the earth for a thousand years, and He will remain as a joint ruler with God throughout eternity in the new creation (Rev. 19:11-20:6; 21:22,23; 22:1-5). He has not just been "absorbed" back into the Godhead. He will remain somehow distinct and separate for all time, an unending testimony to us of Divine love and commitment.

Vs. 4 - *I glorified you on the earth* -- Jesus had magnified, honored, and made the reputation of His Father's character evident. *having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do* -- This is the way in which Jesus made the Father known and praised, by doing his will. We are also in the same relation to both God the Father and Jesus. By doing His will, we will "bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples". This glorifies both the Father and the Son as well (Jn. 15:8).

Vs. 5 - *And now, glorify Me together with Yourself, Father* -- The phrase translated as "together with" means "in the presence of, before, beside, alongside". Jesus is asking to return to be with the Father in glory. This is made more specific by the next phrase: *with the glory which I had with You before the world was* -- He is alluding to His pre-incarnate existence as the eternal Word (1:1). He wishes to return again to His former glory. Cf. Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:14-17.

Vs. 6 - *I manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world* -- The word translated as "manifested" means to "make visible, make evident, make known, reveal, show". Jesus had done the work mentioned in 1:14,18. He had revealed the Father's heart to these men by His day to day life with them. The reference to "Your name" is not readily apparent. Jesus introduced no new name, *per se*, which He taught to His disciples. There are two possibilities that stand out in Jesus' life. One would be His constant reference to God as Father, even Daddy, a practice which had irritated the religious leaders. This was carried on into the early church. Cf. Mk. 14:36; Jn. 5:17,18; Rom. 8:15,16. The other possibility would be the name "Jesus", itself. The Hebrew equivalent, Y'shua, literally means "Yahweh saves". Yahweh was the covenant name of God that He employed in His relationship to the nation of Israel. It occurs far more than any other *word* in the Hebrew OT (7,283 times). You cannot read the Hebrew OT and not have that name implanted in your brain. The name, Y'shua, would be very symbolically significant. It implies that He Himself is the salvation of Yahweh, or the embodiment of that salvation. Though it was a common name for male children (being identical as the Hebrew for "Joshua", the great leader of Israel), God had expressly communicated to Joseph and Mary independently that this should be the name for the child conceived in Mary's womb (Lk. 1:31; Matt. 1:20,21). We also can observe that the disciples interpreted Matt. 28:19 -- "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in *the name* of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" -- as referring to the name "Jesus", for the baptisms recorded in the book of Acts are repeatedly exercised in that name. Jn. 17:11 would also argue for this interpretation: "...keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me...". *Yours they were, and You gave them to Me* -- Some wish to make a major point of the language of apparent ownership that comes out in this verse. The Greek literally says, "to You they were, and to Me You gave them". This is not necessarily saying that God was sovereignly controlling their brains, and chose to assign them to Jesus. It may mean that their hearts were already toward God in some way, and that He then directed them to Jesus, such as happened to the disciples of John the Baptist in the first chapter of the book (1:35-37). The language does not negate free will, nor imply some kind of spooky mind control on the part of God. *and they have kept Your word* -- They have been faithful in following Jesus and doing God's will. They were receptive and responsive to Jesus' teachings from the Father. Cf. vs. 8.

Vss. 7,8 - This summarizes what the disciples have learned from their time with Jesus. Two things: (1.) Everything Jesus had and was came from God; and (2.) Jesus had come forth and had been sent by God into this world.