

John 17:13-26

In verses 6-19, the immediate context is His disciples.

Verses 13-16 The time for Christ to return to the Father and to the glory He had with Him before the world was (verse 5) is at hand. The words He speaks to His disciples are to bring joy to them. Christ has taught them the truths of God while He was with Him in His earthly ministry. As a result of them being followers of Jesus as well as friends of God (**John 15:14-15**), they will be hated by the world. Followers of Christ are in the world, but not of the world as they have been called out of the world. Believers are not of the world as Christ is not of this world through their union with Him. Friendship with God brings hostility from the world (**James 4:4**). Despite the opposition, persecution, and hostility that the disciples will face for His name's sake and for the truth, Jesus does not pray for them to be taken out of the world. Rather, He prays for their protection while in the world. Again, Christ is interceding for His people.

Verse 17 Not only does Jesus pray for His disciple's protection, He prays for their sanctification. Sanctification is the will of God for believers (**1 Thessalonians 4:3**). Believers are predestined to be conformed to the image of the Son (**Romans 8:29**) which speaks to progressive sanctification. Sanctification, or being set apart comes from truth. God's word is truth (**Psalm 119:160**). The word of God sanctifies the believer as His truths are made alive in our lives by the work of the Holy Spirit (**Psalm 119:9-11**)(**2 Timothy 3:16-17**)(**Hebrews 4:12**). The word of truth is in reference to the entire canon of scripture as scripture is God breathed. Our sanctification will never go beyond our time and dedication to the word of God as His truth is how we are sanctified. In the middle of the hatred and persecution the disciples will face, His prayer is for their sanctification. The same applies to all believers as no matter the circumstances in our lives, sanctification is still the will of the Father and what we are to continue to pursue.

- **Psalm 119:9-11** How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word.
¹⁰With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments.¹¹Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.
- **Psalm 119:160** The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.
- **2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is ^[a]inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for ^[b]training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
- **Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Verses 18-19 The word apostle means "to send" or "one sent", "one sent with authority." Christ was sent by the Father into the world to complete the mission and the work the Father desired. Now, these apostles were sent out personally by Jesus while He was living on the earth to be His witnesses and to spread the gospel to the nations. These apostles were called for a specific purpose for Christ in His redemptive plan. There are no more apostles in the same manner of these apostles as no one living today meets the criteria of the apostles that Jesus personally selected and sent out and were witness of His resurrection (**Acts 1:21-22**). However, all Christians are in a sense apostles as we are sent by God into the world to be His witness and ambassadors (**2 Corinthians 5:20**) sharing the truth of God by way of the gospel. The Church is built on the foundation of the prophets and the apostles with Christ being the Cornerstone (**Eph 2:20-21**).

Christ set Himself apart unto the work of the Father which will be finished by His sacrificial death on the cross. As a result of Christ sanctifying Himself unto the work of God, those who believe in Him as He is truth are sanctified both positionally and progressively. Believers are set apart unto Christ at the time of salvation and continue to be sanctified throughout life only by the truth which is found in God and His word.

Beginning in verse 20 through the rest of the chapter, Jesus will intercede and pray for everyone of His sheep which are all that the Father has given Him.

Verses 20-23 Jesus will now intercede in prayer for all the elect. Again, we see Jesus is not praying for the world, but a specific people. He is praying for the elect. His prayer is personal, His upcoming substitutionary death, and His intercession is personal. Salvation is personal. His prayer in these verses is for unity among believers. Jesus will pray that

all believers will have unity and be one united in truth as there is unity within the Godhead. As there is unity between the Father and the Son, there is unity with Christ and believers. Believers are to be united and have unity with other believers centered around truth which is the word of God. The world takes notice of the unity of believers.

Verses on unity

- **John 10:30** I and the Father are [a]one.”
- **Psalm 133:1** Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!
- **Ephesians 4:1-6** Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, ³ being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. ⁴ *There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*
- **Colossians 3:14** Beyond all these things *put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.*

God the Father loves the elect even as He loved His only begotten Son, Jesus. This love is shown in the election of His sheep before the world was to be adopted as sons (**Eph 1:4-6**). In our adoption as sons, we are in union with the Sonship of Christ which is how we have the privilege to cry Abba Father (**Romans 8:15**) (**Gal 4:4-7**). He loves His eternal Son and loves the elect who He chooses to adopt as sons with the same love.

Verse 24 Christ prays and desires that all that the Father had given Him which refers to the elect to whom He is praying for be with Him where He is. He loves the sheep, all that the Father had given Him as is most amazing shown by His death for them on the cross. He desires to be with the ones who He lived for and will soon die for. He expresses a desire for His people to see His glory which the Father had given Him and to dwell with them forever. Believers will see His glory and see Him as He (**Matthew 5:8, 1 John 3:1-2**) is in our eternal state.

- **Revelation 21:1-4** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer *any* sea. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will [a]dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them[b], ⁴ and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

The Father was loving His Son before the foundation of the world. This same love is displayed by the Father toward the elect before the foundation of the world as the Father chooses them and predestines them to adoption as sons to be in union with His Son.

Verses 25-26 All those who are His will be drawn by God and will be taught and learn from God (**John 6:44-45**) which results in them knowing and believing the truth about Christ and the gospel. The love which the Father loves the Son is shown upon and in every believer. Not only is the love of the Father on and in every believer, the love of the Son and the Spirit of Christ resides in every believer (**Romans 8:9**).

John 17 is a unique chapter in the Bible as we see an intertrinitarian prayer from God the Son to God the Father. The hour has come and the cross is in sight. As He is nearing the final moment of His life, the eternal Son lifts His eyes to Heaven and prays to the eternal Father. And what is on His mind? What is of importance in these movements before His arrest in the garden? The Father is on His mind, the disciples are on His mind, and all that the Father had given Him are on His mind. Before the world was the Father was loving His only begotten Son. It is that same love to which the Father loves the elect and gives them to the Son before the foundation of the world by mercy and grace. The Son has lived a perfect life fulfilling all righteousness for the all the Father had given Him and now is moments away from being the substitutionary death for them. It is all that the Father had given Him that are on His mind as well as finishing the work He was sent to accomplish to glorify His Father. He is interceding for them in this prayer, He will intercede for them on the cross, and will continue to intercede for them for all eternity. This prayer is personal as salvation is personal. Christ was thinking about and praying for all believers in the hours before His death as it was for them He was sent. He had prayed that all that the Father had given Him would see His glory and be with Him. Because of His work, that prayer will be completely fulfilled when one day we see Him as He is and be with Him where He is forever just as He prayed to His Father in His High Priestly prayer!

