

Jesus' important teaching to His disciples has reached an end. Perhaps they have walked out onto the Mount of Olives and into the Garden of Gethsemane with Him. Now we come to one of the most remarkable passages of scripture in the entire Word of God. This is Jesus' amazing prayer before His death. It is full of important truths, and reveals the amazing love God has for us. It also presents the plan of God, which culminates with our eternal fellowship with Him.

We often call the passage in Matthew 6 "The Lord's Prayer," but that really was a model prayer for us and should be called the "Disciple's Prayer." This prayer, in chapter 17 of the book of John is truly the LORD'S PRAYER. It is the longest recorded prayer in the Bible, and is sometimes also called "the Lord's High Priestly Prayer." In the last of chapter 16 Jesus has declared that He has "overcome the world" (16:33). He intercedes for all believers in this prayer, and shows us the kind of communication that exists between Jesus and the Father. Jesus' entire life was one of prayer. For centuries people have read this prayer and been amazed:

- **"It is the most remarkable prayer following the most full and consoling discourse ever uttered on the earth."** (Matthew Henry)
- **"This is truly beyond measure a warm and hearty prayer. He opens the depths of His heart, both in reference to us and to His Father, and He pours them all out. It sounds so honest, so simple. It is so deep, so rich, so wide. No one can fathom it."** (Martin Luther)
- **"There is no voice which has ever been heard, either in heaven or in earth, more exalted, more holy, more fruitful, more sublime than the prayer offered up by the Son to God Himself."** (Philip Melancthon, a reformer)
- **"[This] is the greatest prayer ever prayed on earth and the greatest prayer recorded anywhere in Scripture. [John 17] is certainly the "holy of holies" of the Gospel record, and we must approach this chapter in a spirit of humility and worship. To think that we are privileged to listen in as God the Son converses with His Father just as He is about to give His life as a ransom for sinners!"** (Warren W. Wiersbe)



In verses 1-5 Jesus prays for Himself. In 6-19 He prays for His disciples, and finally in verses 20-26 He prays for all believers. This first lesson will cover verses 1-19.

The actual events and details of these moments in the garden are not recorded in John, but they are in the other Gospels:

- ***"Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."***

- *He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”* (Matthew 26:36-46)

- *“Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” And He took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.” He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, “Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.” Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him. Then He came the third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.”* (Mark 14:32-42)

- *“Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.” Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. Then He said to them, “Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.”* (Luke 22:39-46)

- All three of the “synoptic Gospels” carry pretty much the same details of that prayer time. Jesus asked His disciples to stay behind while he prayed, taking Peter, James and John further into the garden with Him. When He separated from these three, He asked them to remain awake and praying. He did not ask them to pray for Him. *They were to pray for themselves!* Jesus knew the “temptation” they would face would be to leave Him, both in body and in spirit. None of them could stay awake. They were exhausted, and full of sorrow, and sleep overcame them. Jesus wanted them to practice being vigilant as they would desperately need such vigilance soon.
- **“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”** In all three of these Gospel narratives Jesus prays the same thing repeatedly. We should note that He fully understood the horrors He would soon face, and in His human form, would not desire to do this and if there was some way to avoid it, would want that. This created an internal struggle for Jesus between His own flesh and spirit, hence the “agony” spoken of in these verses. But He relinquished His own will, for the will of the Father. There was no other way to atone for the sins of mankind, and Jesus would indeed face the cross obediently, willingly.

- The Gospel of Luke tells us that an angel came to minister to Jesus, He was in agony (*the Greek word used here implies a struggle*), and His sweat was *like* drops of blood. Notice in Luke that it says “...sweat became like great drops of blood...” The original Greek uses the word “hōsei” which literally means *as if, like*. It does not say His sweat WAS blood, but “like” blood. We must be careful to investigate the actual words in the original language before we jump to conclusions about what our English translations say. Many people, including physicians, have tried to explain this phenomenon, assuming that Jesus did in fact sweat blood. It is important to note, however, that the scriptures *do not say this*. It may or may not be true. It may have seemed “like” blood to whomever observed it.
- **COMMENTARY:** “Although this medical condition is relatively rare, according to Dr. Frederick Zugibe (Chief Medical Examiner of Rockland County, New York) it is well-known, and there have been many cases of it. The clinical term is “*hematohidrosis*.” “Around the sweat glands, there are multiple blood vessels in a net-like form.” Under the pressure of great stress the vessels constrict. Then as the anxiety passes “the blood vessels dilate to the point of rupture. The blood goes into the sweat glands.” As the sweat glands are producing a lot of sweat, it pushes the blood to the surface - coming out as droplets of blood mixed with sweat.” (Paul S. Taylor)
- Luke also tells us **Jesus prayed “more earnestly.”** This prayer would likely be the one we find here in chapter 17.
- The fact that Peter, James and John all fell asleep waiting for Jesus will probably cause most to ask the question, “**Then who recorded these words?**” In truth, we don’t know. The scriptures don’t tell us. It is possible John himself, or some other disciple, may have overheard them and recorded them, but we don’t have any indication of that either. The bottom line answer to this question is obvious. The Holy Spirit relayed them, in word-for-word accuracy, to the writer of this Gospel. All scripture is “God-breathed.” (See 2 Timothy 3:16)

¹*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,* ²*“as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.* ³*“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*

- “**Jesus spoke these words...**” What words? The words of the last four chapters (13, 14, 15, 16) which are often referred to as the “Upper Room Discourse.” This implies that when Jesus was through with His teaching of the disciples that night, He immediately went into prayer. He used every moment that evening to impart what His disciples would desperately need to know.
- “**Father, the hour has come.**” This is the hour that was planned from before the beginning of earthly time. It is the hour of Jesus’ death, His sacrifice for all our sins, once and for all. His entire life had been leading up to this hour. It was the purpose for His incarnation as a human – a perfect human capable of paying the penalty for our sins.

“Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You”

- “**Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You...**” In the first five verses, Jesus prays for Himself, but not to be spared from “the hour” but rather that **He and the Father would be mutually glorified**. Even though He prays for Himself, He prays that all mankind would know the Father, and know Him as their only way to salvation.

- ***“You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him.”*** This is an awesome statement. The Greek word for “authority” (power in some translations) is **exousia**, which means the *force, capacity, competency, freedom, mastery (magistrate, potentate, control) delegated influence, authority, jurisdiction, liberty, power, right and strength* over something or someone. That’s quite a word. In this case, it is Jesus’ complete authority and power over all flesh. The word used for flesh is **sarx**, which is the word used for literal “flesh,” as opposed to the soul or spirit. That means that our Messiah Yeshua can determine the future of all mankind, in the flesh. This implies resurrection of our bodies into the incorruptible nature promised for eternal life. This verse says He will give this to “as many as You (the Father) have given” Him. How many has God given? ALL FLESH!! This also indicates that the eternal destiny of all mankind is in the hands of Jesus, no one else. Those who think they can find eternal life and a future of “enlightenment” outside of Him are sadly deceived.
- ***“And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*** And exactly **what is “eternal life?”** It is defined for us in this verse. Jesus says here that eternal life is *knowing Yahweh*, the Father and only true God. AND, in knowing the Father, knowledge and relationship is found in His Son, “Jesus Christ.”
- It is interesting to note that in Hebrew, our English “Jesus” is the word “Yeshua” which is literally **“He is salvation”** or **“He saves.”** That is literally what our Master’s name means. “Christ” is the English translation of the Greek “christos,” and in Hebrew it is “Mashiyach” or *anointed*. Jesus, Yeshua, is the Anointed One of God, the Messiah who has come to save, sent by Yahweh. Knowing Yahweh and His Son Yeshua is the only way to eternal life. The Messiah, the Anointed One, is salvation.



⁴“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

- ***“I have glorified You on the earth.”*** Jesus states He has glorified His Father here on earth during his human ministry. His work on earth is nearing its end, and He states what the Father already knows. **Jesus has “revealed”** (the implication of the word “doxazo” in Greek) **the glorious nature of the Father to mankind**, and has shown His merciful gift to all of us.
- ***“I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”*** It may seem odd to us that Jesus says He has already “finished” the work that the Father gave Him to do on earth. His work is to die on a cross, the only acceptable sacrifice to pay for the sins of all men and women. Yet in our earthly timeline, at this moment of prayer, He has not yet died. We cannot adequately understand what it means when God says that He “inhabits eternity.” (see Isaiah 57:15) He sees and declares the beginning from the end. (see Isaiah 46:10) Timelines are irrelevant to Almighty God. Whether it falls on a particular point in earthly time, this **substitutionary death on a cross has already been completed**. It has been ordained from the beginning of time, and God cannot go back on His Word.

- **Y'shua's work is finished at this point, even before it happens in our earthly history.** God is far outside of our timelines. This work God the Father gave Jesus to do was manifold. It culminated in His death and resurrection, but also included the intense 3-year ministry of teachings, miracles, confrontations and declarations of truth to a deceived and thirsty world. As the writer of this Gospel states in the very beginning, Yeshua is the LOGOS of God. He revealed to the world the nature and character of the Father. All of this Jesus has done. It is now completed. In fact, although we cannot understand this, it was completed in the moment it was planned and ordained (before the beginning of our world). That is the certainty and absolute faithfulness of our God.
- ***“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”*** Again, these words of Jesus remind us of the opening verse of this Gospel: ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*** (1:1) For all eternity, except for a 33-year pin prick of time on earth, the Son has been with the Father, and has experienced ultimate glory with Him. You can almost hear how “homesick” Jesus is. He desires to return to the Father, to share His glory and rightful position of authority. He will return soon. But first, He must endure unimaginable horror and agony. We must remember that although Jesus was being obedient to the directives and desires of the Father, He willingly set aside His eternal glory in order to die on a cross for you.

“I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.” ⁷***“Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You.”*** ⁸***“For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.”***

- ***“I have manifested Your name to the men ...”*** Jesus sort of “summarizes” His ministry by indicating that He has declared and made known the awesome and holy name of God to all those who followed His teachings. The word for “men” here in Greek is *anthropos*, which implies human beings in general. It could have been translated “to the people whom You have given Me...” These people would include His disciples, but may not be limited to the 12 who followed Him faithfully. There were many, many who believed in Yeshua HaMashiyach.
- ***“...out of the world...”*** When we believe in the Messiah, a separation from the world takes place. This is part of the great “dividing” that is spoken of often in scripture. The world is the entire system that actively opposes God, His people, and His ways. Believers are called “out” of the world. We must still live here temporarily, but we live differently, believe differently and ultimately go to a different destination with a far different destiny than those still “in” the world. The Holy Spirit continues this separating (sanctifying) work in us, taking us further each day away from the “world.”
- ***“They were Yours, You gave them to Me, ...”*** He indicates that these people previously belonged to the Father, but the Father has given them to the Son. Jesus has repeatedly said that all things, all people, have been given to Him. (see verse 2 above) Many commentators believe that Jesus is specifically referencing His closest disciples, perhaps the ones now sleeping while He prays. They indicate that these men who accompanied Him through His earthly ministry were a special gift to Jesus from the Father. That is true. However, we believe Jesus is also referencing the hundreds of thousands of followers who believed Him during His ministry.

- ***“...they have kept Your word.”*** The disciples weren’t perfect, but here Yeshua says they have accepted and believed, guarded and held fast the Word of the Father. In many ways, this can mean they have embraced “the Word” Himself, the Logos of God, Jesus. He is not indicating that they have kept the “letter of the Law” of Moses, the Old Testament Law. He is indicating they have taken in and believed the Words of the Father, given them through Jesus. They have shown their faith in the revelation given them by Jesus.
- ***“Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You.”*** He is reiterating that He has faithfully done the work of the Father, including declaring to them all the things of and from God the Father. Jesus is the faithful representation of the Father. He has taught them to know the Father.
- ***“...and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.”*** It may have taken three years, but Yeshua is now confident (*He already knows!*) that His disciples finally understand that all things are from the Father, including Jesus Himself, who is the representation and complete revelation of the Father. He is sent from Yahweh, the God of the Jews always seen as unapproachable in the scriptures. Now the disciples personally know God, seen in His son. Jesus has faithfully executed the plan of God, and now these disciples understand. This seemed to always be the “sticking point” in Jesus’ confrontations with the Pharisees, the fact that Jesus is sent directly from, and personally and completely represents the Father, Yahweh, the I AM.
- Jesus has **brought His disciples before the Father here**. He preempts His real prayer for them by calling out their qualifications as disciples. They have heard and they believe. They understand as much as they can handle in this moment. They will understand more later. In the next verses He intercedes for these believers who belong to Him now, not the world.

⁹***“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.”*** ¹⁰***“And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.”*** ¹¹***“Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.”*** ¹²***“While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”***

- ***“I pray for them. I do not pray for the world...”*** Jesus states clearly here that His primary concern is for the current believers, His disciples. He is not praying for the world at large, those who are lost and do not belong to Him. This doesn’t mean His heart does not break for that lost world of people. It does. But right now, He is lifting those who have shown their commitment and belief in Him to the Father. He will pray that they are sanctified, glorified, and protected while still in the world. That prayer applies only to those who believe.
- ***“...but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours.”*** The only way we can belong to the Father is to believe in the Son. As He argued with the Pharisees, if we know the Father, truly seek Him and find Him, then we will know the Son. The Pharisees were not really seeking God, so they could not know Jesus.
- ***“And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.”*** Jesus once again confirms His oneness with the Father. All that belongs to the Father, is also His. All that belongs to the Son, belongs to the Father. And **those who belong to Jesus, will glorify Him**.

- We have spoken before of the implication of the Greek word “doxazo” to *reveal* the glorious nature of something. These disciples will do this soon. It is the nature and character of all believers, from these early disciples through those today, to reveal the glorious nature of the Son, and the Father. It is the whole purpose of our existence, to glorify God, to reveal Him to the lost world. Our lives should reveal the character and nature of Jesus.
- **“Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You.”** Again, Jesus speaks as if His work, His death on the cross, is already done, and that He is not in the world any longer. This is preordained completeness of the atoning work Jesus came to do. It is certain at any point on our timeline. His work is done, even if it will not take place in our time until the next day. Jesus has already visited tomorrow. Now, having completed His work, He is returning to the Father. As Jesus told His confused disciples, He is leaving the world, but they must remain behind. They are still in the corrupt world, and they will need God’s protection. *(It should comfort us to know that God has already been to our tomorrows. He has not only today, but all tomorrows, in His hands!)*
- **“Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me,...”** The name of the Father, Yahweh, is a mighty name with the power to save, protect and preserve. Throughout scripture there are hundreds of references to the strong Name of God.



“The name of Yahweh is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe.” (Proverbs 18:10)

“For whoever calls on the name of Yahweh shall be saved.” (Romans 10:13, quoting Joel 2:32)

(NOTE: the correct translation for the English word “LORD” in our Old Testaments is the proper name of God, Yahweh. The Jews believed this name was too holy to speak or write, so they referred to Him as Lord, “Adonai.” Wherever we see the word LORD in our Bibles, all in caps, it is actually the covenant and proper Name of God the Father, Yahweh.)

- **“...that they may be one as We are.”** The oneness of the Father and the Son is truly beyond our comprehension. It is a completeness we cannot understand. Yet, that same oneness is what Jesus prays for His disciples, *a oneness with each other*. Believers need one another in this world. We need the fellowship and family of other believers to exist here. Jesus prays that we will know the same kind of relationship with each other as Jesus has with the Father. That is remarkable. Unfortunately, over the years our human nature has interfered with the true oneness of the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit baptizes each of us into that Body, the unity of believers, but our flesh causes division and disruption in that unity. Still, wherever you find believers, you will find they are in fellowship. The entire Body of Messiah has a oneness in purpose and destiny unknown to the rest of the world.
- **COMMENTARY: He prays that we should be one “as we are”; that is, as the Father and the Son are one. The Father has answered every prayer of His Son, and He has answered this one. There is an organic unity which God has made. The Holy Spirit takes all true believers and baptizes them into the body of Christ, identifies them in the body of Christ. The disgrace of it all is that down here the believers are pretty well divided. But there is only one true church, and every believer in Jesus Christ is a member of that church. It is called the body of Christ. (McGee)**

- Jesus states again that while He was in the world, He has kept His disciples safe. He has been their “strong tower.” He has protected and kept them safe, and He has kept them together. This prayer to the Father is for two things: their “keeping” and their oneness. Jesus is leaving the world, leaving them, but they stay behind in the world. They will need the Father’s keeping, and the Holy Spirit’s unifying power.
- **“...and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.”** The “son of perdition” here refers to Judas Iscariot. Jesus does not say this to indicate He has failed in His mission to save the world. Judas failed. The choice was his to make. **The prayer Jesus prays is for true believers, those who have accepted Yeshua HaMashiyach.** It applies only to them. Judas was never a true believer. He never accepted Jesus as the promised Son of God, His Savior. Here Judas is called a “son of perdition.” In Greek, those words are “uīhos apōleia” which is literally *the son of ruin, damnation, destruction, and death*. Jesus is the Son of God. Those who believe in Him are God’s sons and daughters. Those who chose not to believe, to reject Jesus, are sons of the evil one. **They are “sons of perdition.”** Jesus accused the Pharisees of this: ***“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me.”*** (John 8:44-45)
- It is very interesting to note here that the phrase “son of perdition” is used one other time in scripture: ***“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.”*** (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4) This passage deals with the coming final world leader, the one we call “Antichrist.” The same Greek words are used in both places. Both Judas and the Antichrist are titled “sons of perdition.” Both sell out God. Judas did it for 30 pieces of silver. The final world ruler will do it for power and worship. These, and all others who reject Yeshua, have chosen to follow the devil, not God.

¹³***“But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.***

- Jesus is coming back to the Father shortly. So while He is still here, He is speaking “in the world” and He is also speaking TO the world – all those who would read these words throughout the ages. He knew that when He was not here to calm, comfort and protect His disciples “in the flesh,” they must learn to find their joy on their own. The Holy Spirit would come soon to fill the empty place in Jesus’ absence, and to manifest that joy within them.
- ***My joy fulfilled in themselves.*** This phrase does not mean that we experience joy in and of ourselves. It means we are filled with the “joy of the Lord,” the joy that comes only from loving Jesus. The disciples were the first generation of believers who would carry the good news to the ends of the earth. They would also carry His joy to others. Joy is a common theme during this intense teaching time the night before Jesus died. God wants us to be filled with the joy at all times, through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The only way to do this is to live in daily intimate contact with the Master.

¹⁴“I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁵“I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶“They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

- Jesus has transferred God’s Word to His disciples, who have embraced it, and God’s Son. Now they are considered “*not of the world*,” meaning they have been separated, sanctified and set apart from the world. They do not think as the world does. They do not behave as the world does. This is true for all believers. And because of this, the world hates them, and the world hates us, fellow believers. Jesus has already told His disciples to expect this hatred and persecution. (see John 15:20)
- ***“I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.”*** Jesus is not asking that the disciples go with Him, out of this world. They must remain and endure the persecution and world’s hatred. They have been commissioned to be the hands and feet of Jesus in the world, showing who He is to others through their lives, and their sharing of the Word of God. Instead of removing them from the world, Jesus prays that they are protected from the evil one.
- The Greek word for “keep” is *tereo*. It is used throughout this prayer. This word means to *guard against loss or injury, properly keeping an eye on, to hold fast*. This prayer asks the Father to guard the disciples against any loss or injury, to hold fast to them by keeping His eye on them. All of the disciples will go on to experience some very difficult times, but through it all, God has His eye on them, and will safely escort them into the presence of their Master ultimately. It is a beautiful prayer that we can pray and experience today as well.
- **COMMENTARY: The Word of God causes problems in the world today. The Bible is the most revolutionary Book in the world. It is revolutionary to teach that you cannot save yourself, that only Christ can save you. And you can’t make this world better. Only Jesus Christ can do that. That’s revolutionary, and the world doesn’t want to hear that. They’d rather plant a few flowers and try to clean up pollution. The problem is that the pollution is in the human heart. (McGee)**
- ***“They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.”*** Jesus repeats this often. He knew His prayer would be recorded. He knew you and I would be reading it, studying it today. This is a reminder for us. Jesus is not of this world. *We are not of this world*, we are “of” God’s world. We are citizens of heaven and will dwell with God the Father and God the Son, with His Holy Spirit for all eternity. Remembering that we are of *that* world, not this world, should help us define who we are, and not be deceived into loving this world, or behaving like it behaves.

¹⁷“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹“And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

- ***“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”*** The word “sanctify” here is the Greek word *hagiazō*, which means *to make holy, to purify, consecrate and set apart for a special purpose*. Sanctification is a life-long process, the work of the Holy Spirit in believers. Here Jesus associates this process with the Father’s truth, then states that truth is His Word.

- Jesus also said that He is *“the way, the truth, and the life.”* (14:2) In a few hours Jesus will stand before Pilate who quips “what is truth?” Ironically, Pilate is standing before the One who embodies all Truth. HE IS TRUTH. As Jesus prays here, He states that our process of being made holy involves being immersed in the truth, and the truth is only found in God’s Word. God is active in our sanctification through His Word.
- In the world today, **people argue there is no “absolute truth.”** They are wrong. God’s Word is the absolute truth – the only truth. Jesus is truth. The world has rejected Truth. They have placed their faith and trust in the Father of Lies, not Truth itself. It is the Truth of God’s Word that sets us free from this world. The Word is the critical element in our remaining in the Messiah: *“Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* (John 8:31-32)
- *“As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.”* Jesus refers to the “Great Commission.” Just as the Father sent the Son into the world, Jesus has commissioned and sent these first believers also into the world to bring the good news of salvation. Jesus was on a mission from the Father, and **all believers are on a mission from the Son.** We are not “of” the world, but we live here, and it is our mission to bring the light of Yeshua into this dark place, and to help others come out of the world.
- **COMMENTARY: Should followers of Christ withdraw from the world to set up their own exclusive communities or retreat from society into “Christian ghettos”? Not if they are to fulfill Christ’s prayer in John 17. Engagement, not isolation, is His desire. Some early Christians sought refuge in the catacombs of Rome. But that practice was only temporary, and they were forced there only by the most extreme persecutions. Normally, they could be found actively participating in the society. Actually, Scripture recognizes a tension between separation and involvement. Many passages urge us to pursue a distinctive, holy lifestyle. Our commitments, character, and conduct should contrast vividly with those of people who do not know or follow God. On the other hand, Jesus calls us to live and work side by side with those very same people. He sends us into the world to make an impact. Naturally, that can lead to conflict. If our loyalty is given to Jesus, we can expect tension with others who follow a different course. Whether we undergo mild teasing and insults or open hostility and even violence, “normal” Christianity involves conflict with the world to which we are called. Fortunately, the New Testament gives us plenty of examples to follow (Jesus, Peter, Barnabas, Paul, etc.)**
- *“And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.”* In our understanding of the word “sanctify” we can’t imagine Jesus would need to be sanctified. He is already holy. However, His use here is the “set apart” meaning. He has set Himself apart from His glory, from His home in heaven, from His Father with a singular focus of coming to earth to pay the price required for mankind’s sins. Jesus set Himself apart to do His Father’s will, like the priests consecrating, setting themselves apart for service to Yahweh. It is a surrender to the will of God with total commitment. Jesus knows the truth. He is the truth. He also knows that Truth is the answer to everything, and the foundation of salvation. He wants His disciples to know the absolute truth. Right now they are confused. When the Holy Spirit comes, He will *guide them into all truth.*



In these first 19 verses Jesus has earnestly prayed for Himself and His disciples. This is a prayer for believers, not the world at large. It applies to the believers then, and in the next seven verses, Y’Shua will apply it to all believers of all ages. It is a remarkable prayer, especially considering what Jesus was about to experience on the cross. He does not pray here for a “pass” from the Father on this horror, but instead for us. It was recorded, as God intended, so we could better understand the heart of our Savior.