

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF JOHN, CHAPTERS 13 - 17: THE UPPER ROOM AND GARDEN DISCOURSES

PART ONE: The Upper Room Discourse (John 13 and 14)

A. Jesus, the example of a servant (John 13:1-17)

1. 13:1 – Consistent and complete love for believers.
2. 13:2 – The servant loves believers despite the fact that there are those who are not true believers among them. Facts concerning Judas Iscariot:
 - a. John 6:64 – Judas continued not to place His faith in Christ and was therefore not saved.
 - b. John 17:12 – It is very clear that Judas was lost and will perish.
 - c. Luke 22:3 – Satan entered Judas to set up the arrangements to betray Jesus.
 - d. John 13:27 – Satan entered Judas again so that he could get the officials together and guide them to Jesus.
3. 13:3 – As a servant Jesus was assured of three matters:
 - a. God had entrusted His plan of salvation to Christ. Are we trustworthy to carry out the part of God's plan that He has for us.
 - b. Jesus' heavenly origin was from God.
 - c. Jesus' heavenly destiny was assured.
4. 13:4 – Jesus laid aside that which was rightfully His. Jesus did not give up His deity or His equality with God (John 5:17, 18). Jesus did not give up His divine attributes nor did He give up the use of them (Mark 2:5-11). Jesus did give up the independent use of His divine attributes (John 5:19, 30 cp. Mark 13:32). To take off his outer garments was a great demonstration of being a real servant and humbling Himself (cp. Philippians 2:5-8).
5. 13:5 – Jesus began to perform a job for His disciples that was normally done by the lowest servant.
6. 13:6 – Humbling himself to do the lowest task is often questioned by the most sincere of believers.
7. 13:7 – Modeling as a servant is not always understood at the present moment but is understood later.
8. 13:8
 - a. Humbling oneself to do the lowest task is often not only questioned but opposed by the most sincere of believers.
 - b. Humbling oneself helps a growing believer with His need for fellowship.
9. 13:8-10 – Servanthood may temporarily confuse people regarding the difference between salvation and fellowship but provides an opportunity to teach this distinction.
10. 13:10-11- True servanthood reminds those who profess salvation but lack its reality of their lost condition.
11. 13:12 - Servanthood helps other believers to be taught and to learn.
12. 13:13 – Servanthood does not change our authority nor does it change our spiritual gift.
13. 13:14
 - a. Servanthood is willing to do that which serves other believers even if it is something we do not ordinarily do for them.

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- b. This act illustrates that we do a real service to one another when we restore and forgive one another.
- 14. 13:15 – Servanthood provides an example for other believers not in doing what the servant did for them but in doing as the servant did to them. The way Jesus carefully worded this shows that this was an illustration and not an ordinance.
- 15. 13:16 – Since as Christ’s slaves, we are not greater than our master Christ and since He set an example in lowly service; we should not expect less of ourselves.
- 16. 13:17 – The servant example of a believer blesses other believers if two conditions are met:
 - a. They know or understand the servant example
 - b. They do or put into practice the servant example.

B. Dealing with betrayal and disloyalty (John 13:18-30)

1. 13:18-19 – Jesus makes it clear that His instructions on servanthood were not for all of His disciples. He emphasizes that He knows His own (John 10:27; 2 Timothy 2:19). The purpose of this betrayal being allowed was to fulfill scripture and to authenticate Christ’s word as God’s word because He told them it was going to happen before it happened (cp. Isaiah 41:22, 26; 44:7). As a result Jesus’ disciples would continue to believe that He was God (Lit. that “I am” – see John 8:24, 58, 59 cp. Exodus 3:13, 14). The Old Testament prophecy reemphasizes that the one who betrayed Jesus would actually eat with Him. To pretend friendship and fellowship with a person by eating with him and then to betray him was considered especially evil.
2. 13:20 – Jesus clarifies that the Apostles (His “sent ones”) have the same authority as He does. Christ Himself has the same authority as the Father. If we try to reject Christ while accepting the Father, God states that we reject both (1 John 2:23). By the same token, if we accept Christ and what He says and reject the Apostles and what they say we are rejecting Christ (1 John 4:6).
2. 13:20 – Jesus clarifies that the Apostles (His “sent ones”) have the same authority as He does. Christ Himself has the same authority as the Father. If we try to reject Christ while accepting the Father, God states that we reject both (1 John 2:23). By the same token, if we accept Christ and what He says and reject the Apostles and what they say we are rejecting Christ (1 John 4:6).
3. 13:21 – Note how Jesus felt about His prior knowledge that Judas was going to betray Him – He was inwardly troubled. Jesus communicated plainly that one of the twelve was going to betray Him.
4. 13:22-25 – The disciples have no idea who the betrayer is. Peter has John ask Him. Principle: When we want to know something regarding Christ, we should ask Him.
5. 13:26 – Jesus stated that He would identify the betrayer by showing a special offer and gesture of friendship by dipping the morsel and giving it to him.
6. 13:27 – Judas’ response to Christ’s offer of friendship was not positive. Satan entered Judas and Jesus told him to quickly do what he had already chosen to do.

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7. 13:28-29 – The disciples, however, did not understand it at this time despite the fact that Jesus had plainly told them how He would identify the betrayer. This reinforces the concept that God's word is to be interpreted in a plain and normal sense. The disciples, however, interpreted the situation in terms of their previous experience rather than by what was actually said.
8. 13:30 – Judas left Christ and disciples permanently showing He was not a genuine believer (1 John 2:19).

C. Dealing with the lack of Christ's visible presence (John 13:31-38)

1. 13:31 – Jesus referred to His death in two ways:
 - (a) He would be glorified.
 - (b) God would be glorified in Christ.
2. 13:32 – Jesus stated that if God was glorified in Christ by Christ's death then God would in the future quickly glorify Christ by raising Him from the dead (see John 12:28). Christ is glorified by:
 - (a) His earthly life (John 8:54; 11:4)
 - (b) His death on the cross (John 17:4; 13:31)
 - (c) His resurrection (Acts 3:13; cp. John 13:32 cp. Luke 24:26)
 - (d) His ascension (John 7:39 cp. 16:7 cp. 1 Timothy 3:16)
 - (e) Right now by the Holy Spirit (John 16:14)
 - (f) In the future at His return (2 Thessalonians 1:10 cp. Colossians 3:4)
3. 13:33 – Jesus stated that He would be visibly present with believers only a little while longer. Then there would be a time when they would seek Jesus in His visible presence (Acts 1:11). Jesus, however, would be gone from them visibly but present with them spiritually (Matthew 28:20; John 14:18-20). Jesus made it clear in John 13:36 that they could not go with Him at this time but they would go later. The condition for going later to where Jesus is, is to trust Christ as Savior (John 8:21, 24). To go where Jesus is later is likely referring to the believer's death (2 Corinthians 5:8 cp. John 13:37).
4. 13:34-35 – So the unasked question is: How would people know the reality of Jesus without His visible presence? How would they know the identity of those of us who have trusted Him? Jesus gave a new commandment for believers. We are to love one another. This love is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and defined in 2 John 1:5-6. Here Jesus tells us that we are to love one another in the same way that He loved us. This love is to be sacrificial and visible (1 John 3:16-18). This kind of love will help people to know that we have been taught by Jesus in a way that changes our lives and to help them to see the reality of Jesus and our relationship with Him. The Greek word for disciple is one who is taught – a pupil or student.
5. 13:36 – Peter asked Jesus where He was going. Jesus did not answer Peter's question directly, but it is obvious Peter understood the Lord to mean that He was going to heaven. Peter probably thought Jesus was going to heaven by means of death. Jesus, however, meant that He was going to heaven by means of resurrection and ascension.

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6. 13:37-38 - Peter declared to Jesus that He was ready to follow Jesus by means of his own death right then. We cannot dictate God's plan for our individual lives based on His plan for other people. Our job is to follow (i.e. obey) Christ – see John 21:20-22. Secondly, we cannot stay true to Christ based on sheer will power. We think we know ourselves (1 Corinthians 10:12) but Christ knows us better. Like Peter, many times our feelings tell us one thing (Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 28:26) when God's word tells us otherwise. Luke 22:31, 32 describes what was going on with Peter. Satan's power would overwhelm us if it were not for Christ's praying or interceding for us.

D. Jesus' Comfort for Believers (John 14:1-3)

1. 14:1 – Jesus knows that the Apostles are concerned about the fact that He will be leaving them. In the same way we face many uncertainties and changes in our lives. His counsel for them and for us is to not be worried or upset and to trust God and to trust Christ to help us through the situation.

2. 14:2-3 – The motivation to lead a life of not being worried and upset and to trust Christ and the Father in life's uncertainties are the following facts:

- a. Where God dwells in heaven, there are many dwelling places. This tells us that it will not be crowded and that God does not lack for space to put us.
- b. In going or leaving His earthly ministry, Christ states that one of His roles will be to prepare a place for us between His first and second coming. His statement that He is preparing a **place** for us shows us that heaven is not simply a state of mind. It is an actual place.
- c. Christ states that He will come again. This does not refer to the death of the believer but refers to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ as outlined in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. The death of the believer is the departure of the believer's soul and spirit to be with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23; 2 Timothy 4:6; 2 Peter 1:14-15).
- d. When Christ returns, He will actually receive us to Himself. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 states that we will rise up off or out of the ground - whether living or dead – to meet Christ in the air. Our bodies will be made imperishable and unable to die whether we are living or dead (1 Corinthians 15:51-53) and will be exactly like the resurrection body of the Lord Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:21). These verses all fit with the fact that we will be wherever Jesus is.

E. Jesus the way to the Father (John 14:4-14)

1. 14:4-5 – Jesus states that we know the way to God in order to be part of the rapture. Thomas did not understand Christ's words. He did not understand:

- (a) where Christ was going.
- (b) the way to go there.

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2. John 14:6 – Jesus emphasized that He was speaking of the way to God. Jesus made it clear that He was the only way to God. This should answer those who believe that we can approach God by some other way (Proverbs 14:12) no matter how sincere they may be (Romans 10:1-2). In addition Jesus had stated up front that the way to God and to salvation was narrow and small and that only a few would be saved (Matthew 7:13-14). To state that Christ is the only way to salvation is not arrogance on our part. It is rather the solemn and plain statement of Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus also stated that He was the truth and not just a truth. While God's word is truth (John 17:17), Jesus Himself is God's word packaged in human form (John 1:1, 14). When Jesus states that He is the life, He makes it clear that He is a life exclusive of all others. Christ is said to be our life in Colossians 3:4. Jesus Himself is the eternal life God gives us so that if we have Christ, we have that life (1 John 5:10-12).

3. 14:7-9 – To know Christ is to know the Father (see John 8:19). This knowledge based on faith is eternal life (John 17:3). Not only have we known the Father but we have seen Him in a spiritual sense. We cannot see God and live (Exodus 33:20; 1 Timothy 6:16) but we can see God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6). Jesus tells us to see Him is to see God. For this reason Jesus is said to be the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15).

4. 14:10-11 –

- a. Christ in the Father and the Father in Christ expresses their total and complete unity.
- b. Christ depends on the Father for His words (John 7:16; 12:49; 14:24).
This is an example of the voluntary subordination of the Son to the Father and does not destroy the equality between them (John 5:17-18). American cultural values and the values of other cultures tell us if we are subordinate to someone, we are not equal to them. However, the word of God communicates that simply because someone submits to another, equality is not destroyed.
- c. God's word states that in some cases Jesus Himself did the works in John 5:17; Matthew 4:23-25; 9:27-30. In other instances God did the works through Jesus in John 14:10; 3:2; Acts 2:22.
- d. We are commanded to keep on believing that unity between the Father and the Son. If we cannot believe or trust Jesus because of His words, we should believe or trust Him because of His works.

5. 14:12 – For the believer who continues to trust Christ, there are two promises to be fulfilled:

- a. to do the same works as Christ.
- b. to do greater works than Christ.

Many explain that the greater works consist of sharing the gospel with people and seeing them receive Christ for eternal life. However, these commentators leave unexplained the doing of the same works. The easiest explanation is: Believers who persevere in trusting Christ will do these same works at some point in the future which consists of this life and the life to come, i.e. the 1000 year reign of Christ and the eternal state in heaven after that (1 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 20:4-6; 22:5). Keep in mind that Jesus and the Apostles performed miracles of the age to come (Hebrews 2:3-4; cp. 6:6

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and Matthew 11:3-5 cp. Isaiah 35:5-6; 61:1). The power for this supernatural working will obviously not come from us. Jesus states that we will do the same works and greater works because He goes to the Father. Because Jesus goes to the Father, He will send or give the Holy Spirit (John 16:7; 7:39).

6. 14:13-14 – As the way to the Father, Christ is able to give each believer special access to God the Father. Asking in Jesus' name has been compared by many to signing His name on a check. A check has to have other portions filled out or printed out in order for it to process. Other details are needed such as the amount, the date and to whom it is made. In the same way there are other conditions for answered prayer such as no unconfessed sin (Psalm 66:18), asking according to God's will (1 John 5:14); asking for what is good (Matthew 7:11); asking in faith (James 1:6-7) and asking with perseverance (Luke 18:1-7). The verse itself implies an additional condition and that is that God may be glorified. In other words, does this request have good possibility of resulting in God being glorified?

F. Jesus promises the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-26)

1. John 14:15 – The test of our love for Christ is our obedience to His commandments. To the extent that we obey His commandments, that is the extent of our love for Him. Christ's commandments were given in two phases: (1) Those things He spoke during His earthly ministry (John 14:26) and (2) Those things for which His followers were not yet ready during His earthly ministry. These things were later revealed by Christ to the Holy Spirit and by the same Holy Spirit to the Apostles (John 16:12-15; 2 Peter 3:2).

2. John 14:16-17 – In order to obey Christ's commandments which cover not only the external but the heart as well, we need help. For this reason, God has given us another helper, the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). The Greek word for "another" is "allos" which refers to another of the same kind. This shows us that the Holy Spirit is a helper like Christ and that He is God. Notice that His presence with the believer is eternal and not temporary. The Holy Spirit is referred to as the Spirit of truth which shows that He does not lie (cp. 1 John 5:7 with John 14:6; 17:17). The world (=the unsaved) cannot receive the Holy Spirit for 2 reasons:

- a. The unsaved do not behold Him. This word does not refer to seeing its object as much as it refers to observing it or studying it so one knows its importance or significance as in 1 John 1:1 and John 6:40.
- b. The unsaved do not know the Holy Spirit. This would relate to a salvation experience as in John 17:3 with the Father and the Son.

In contrast to the unsaved world, the saved (specifically the Apostles) know the Holy Spirit in a saving sense because He was present **with** them during Christ's earthly ministry but in the future will be **in** them after Pentecost. Two features of the Holy Spirit's ministry for the present age are noteworthy: His indwelling of each believer and the permanence of that indwelling. He came on and left believers in the Old Testament as noted in 1 Samuel 16:13-14; Psalm 51:11.

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3. 14:18 – Christ emphasized that His absence would not leave believers without help. He would come to them through the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit to empower them to obey His commandments.

4. 14:19 – Because Jesus was leaving, the world would no longer behold Him in the sense of observing Him to understand His importance. The disciples would continue to behold Him in the sense of observing Him in His resurrected form and in His working after His ascension as the Holy Spirit would continue to testify of Christ (John 15:26) and glorify Christ (John 16:14). Not only does Christ's bodily resurrection guarantee our future bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-21; Romans 8:11) but His resurrection means that we now participate in His resurrection in a spiritual sense (Colossians 2:12; 3:1; Romans 6:10-13) which enables us live a life of practical righteousness because we are baptized by the Spirit into not only His spiritual body but His death and resurrection.

5. 14:20 – In the day when the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers permanently which was on the day of Pentecost, there were three realities they would know:

- a. He is in the Father, i.e. Christ's complete unity with the Father.
- b. Believers are in Christ because of the baptism of the Holy Spirit which first occurred on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:27).
- c. Christ is in the believer because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; John 14:17-18).

6. 14:21 – Two criteria for loving God:

- a. having Christ's commandments, i.e. knowing them.
- b. keeping and obeying them.

Notice in v. 15 that if we love Christ, we will obey His commandments. In this verse the reverse is true: if we obey Christ's commandments, we love Him. Keep in mind that obedience to Christ's commandments is not just a matter of externals but our inward thoughts and attitudes as well (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28). Notice that if we love Christ (= obeying His commandments), we will be:

- (a) loved by God the Father.
- (b) loved by Christ Himself.
- (c) Christ will disclose Himself to the one who loves Him.

The relationship between obedience and a full knowledge of Jesus Christ is clearly set forth. In order to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as set forth in 2 Peter 3:18, obedience to Christ's commandments is essential. Question: Since God loves everyone (John 3:16) and since Christ loves everyone (1 John 4:10), what does it mean that God the Father and Christ will love us if we love Him (=obey Christ's commandments)? The answer is that God has degrees of love and we appropriate that love first by trusting Christ and have the love which comes from being in Christ as spoken of in Romans 8:38-39. Then there is the love which comes from acting in obedience to His commandments. This is the highest degree of love that we can experience (John 15:10).

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7. 14:22 – This disclosure that Christ makes of Himself by obedience to His commandments is not something that the world or the unsaved will experience because they cannot receive the one who will disclose Christ to them, i.e. the Holy Spirit (John 14:17).
8. 14:23 – If anyone loves Christ (=obeys His word, i.e. commandments), not only will he experience the full extent of the Father's love and both the Father and Christ will live in fellowship in that believer to help him be fruitful.
9. 14:24 – If we do not love Christ, we will not obey His words, i.e. His commandments. Christ solemnly declares that this pronouncement is not from His own initiative but is a communication from God the Father Himself.
10. 14:25 – Christ emphasizes that this communication about obeying His commandments and the giving of the Holy Spirit to help along with the promised blessings have been communicated to them during His earthly ministry.
11. 14:26 – There were two things that the Holy Spirit would do as their helper:
 - a. He would teach the Apostles and by extension all believers these things of which He has been speaking during His earthly ministry.
 - b. He would help the Apostles remember all that He communicated to them during His earthly ministry. This is the material we have in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The material we have in the rest of the New Testament is given through God to Christ to the Holy Spirit who gives it to the Apostles and their associates and then recorded in the written New Testament for us (John 16:12-15).

G. Jesus, the world and believers (John 14:27-31)

1. 14:27 - Christ left us without His physical presence but not without His peace which is one of the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). The nature of this peace is Christ's peace not a peace like the world gives. The world gives circumstantial peace but Christ gives peace of heart and mind regardless of the circumstances. Notice that the peace of Christ is a gift. It is something we must appropriate or receive. It is not something that comes to us without any conditions. To do so we must live in obedience to His word (Isaiah 48:18), stop worrying, state our requests to Him along with thanksgiving for specific matters (Philippians 4:6-7) and walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 22-23). To walk in the Spirit is to trust Christ for the direction and power to live the Christian life (Colossians 2:6; Galatians 3:1-3; 2:20). Two sins that we must avoid are worry and fear in order to experience this peace.
2. 14:28 – The departure of Christ and His coming to us through the Holy Spirit enables Him to be present with every believer. When Christ was on earth, He could not be present with every believer at once. Our response to this truth is to rejoice because He is going to the Father from whom He will send the Holy Spirit (John 15:26). One of the reasons Jesus was returning to the Father was to receive the glory which He eternally had with the Father before the creation of the world (John 17:5). During His earthly ministry, Christ was equal with God (John 5:17-18) but according to Philippians 2:7, He gave up the independent use of His divine attributes. Jesus by becoming human was

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made for a little while lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:9). The purpose of this was so that He could experience death for everyone. Jesus could not die as God (1 Timothy 1:17) nor could He die as an angel (Luke 20:36). He was therefore put to death in the flesh or in His humanity (1 Peter 3:18). So for a time the Father was greater than Jesus. That time was during the earthly ministry of Jesus. When Jesus stated that “the Father is greater than I”, He did not say “the Father was greater than I” nor did He say “the Father will be greater than I.” Jesus spoke these words during His earthly ministry showing this was temporary.

Summary of the emptying of Christ

- a. Jesus did not cease to be God during His earthly ministry (John 5:17, 18; 10:30, 33; 14:8, 9; Matthew 14:33).
- b. Jesus did not give up His divine attributes during His earthly ministry (Mark 2:5-7; Matthew 8:26-27 cp. Psalm 89:8-9; John 1:48-50).
- c. Notice the same references above show that Jesus did not give up the use of His divine attributes during His earthly ministry.
- d. Jesus did give up the independent use of His divine attributes during His earthly ministry (Mark 13:32). Another helpful way of expressing this is that Jesus voluntarily did not use His divine attributes at different times during His earthly ministry. In John 5:19 Jesus made it clear that during His earthly ministry, He was capable of doing everything the Father did. He made it equally clear in John 5:30 that He did not do anything including the use of His divine attributes on His own initiative. He was in complete subjection to the Father.

3. 14:29 – Why did Jesus share the truths of the peace He would give, His physical absence and the coming of the Holy Spirit? The purpose of His sharing these truths was so that His disciples would believe the truth or reality of His word when it came to pass. One of the purposes of predictive prophecy in God’s word is to build our faith.

4. 14:30-31 - When Jesus refers to the ruler of this world, He is referring to Satan, the Devil. He speaks of Satan coming to move against Jesus but Jesus emphasizes that Satan has nothing in Jesus which means he has no power or influence over Him. God’s purpose in allowing Satan to move against Jesus has two reasons:

- a. so that the world might know that Jesus loved the Father completely.
- b. so that the world might know that what Jesus was going to do (i.e. His suffering and death) was according to the Father’s commandment.

While we do not understand why God allowed evil, we see one of His purposes is to help people know and understand truth that they might otherwise be incapable of understanding. Notice that Jesus told them it was time to leave the upper room. Mark 14:26 tells us that they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. This was the scene of Jesus’ illustration of the vine and the branches in John 15:1-7.

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PART TWO: The Garden Discourse (John Chapter 15 through 17)

A. Fruitfulness (John 15:1-17)

What is fruit?

- a. Galatians 5:22, 23 – The fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.
- b. Ephesians 5:8-9 – The fruit of the light (or Spirit in some versions): goodness, righteousness and truth.
- c. Romans 1:13 – those who are won to Christ
- d. Romans 15:26-28 – giving to God's work
- e. Colossians 1:10 – every kind of good work
- f. Philippians 1:10; Hebrews 12:11 – practical righteousness
- g. Hebrews 13:15 – praise to God in confessing or thanking His name.

1. 15:1-5 – The symbols are: Jesus = the true vine (in contrast to the nation of Israel who proved to be untrue to God – Isaiah 5:1-7), God the Father = vinedresser or gardener, branches = disciples who may or may not be saved. Those branches (disciples) who are in Christ but do not bear fruit are taken away. This refers to the sin unto death (1 Corinthians 11:30-32; 1 John 5:16, 17). Christ prunes (same Greek word translated cleanses) every disciple who bears fruit for the purpose of bearing more fruit. The disciples who were with Him were already clean because of the word He spoke to them which they had received by faith. There are two conditions for us to produce fruit:

- a. abide in Christ is to abide in His love (15:9) and we do this by obeying His commandments (15:10),
- b. Christ abiding in us. This is used interchangeably with His words abiding in us in 15:7. Psalm 119:11 describes it as internalizing God's word so that we avoid sin and express our devotion to God (Colossians 3:16) and so that we overcome Satan (1 John 2:14).

If we fail to meet these two conditions we will not produce fruit because we cannot do anything without the life of Christ effectively working in us. Yet if we meet both conditions, we will produce much fruit.

2. 15:6 – The one who consistently does not abide in Christ shows that He has never had the life of Christ (cp. 1 John 2:19). Remember that the branches are not believers but disciples and not all disciples are saved (John 6:60-66). Notice the sequence:

- a. The one who does not consistently abide in Christ is thrown away as a branch or disciple.
- b. He dries up or withers. Even what he had is taken away from him (cp. Matthew 25:29; Luke 19:26; Matthew 13:12; Luke 8:18). These are the people who sat under good Bible teaching and for a while fellowshiped with the people of God (Luke 13:24-28).

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c. The “They” who **gather** them (NIV does not include the word “they”) has reference to the angels who will gather these people when Christ returns and **cast** them into the furnace of **fire**, i.e. hell, where these branches not just the fruit on them are burned (cp. Matthew 13 41-42).

3. 15:7 – The affect of abiding on prayer: Remember to abide in Christ is to abide in His love by obeying Him (John 15:10). For Christ’s words to abide in you, see the discussion on 15:1-5 point (a). If both of these conditions are met, we will be thinking, speaking and behaving in a manner totally in line with God’s word so that what we ask and what we desire in prayer will be totally in harmony with the mind and will of God. God promises a “yes” answer for prayer under such a circumstance (see also 1 John 5:14).

4. 15:8 – The bearing of much fruit glorifies God the Father. According to 15:5 we bear much fruit by abiding in Christ (=obeying the commandments of the New Testament as in 15:9-10) and Christ abiding in us (=His words abiding in us 15:7). We distinguish ourselves as Christ’s disciples by bearing much fruit to glorify God. This fits well with John 8:31 where abiding in God’s word makes us disciples in the fullest sense. To abide in God’s word is described in James 1:25 as being “not a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer of God’s word”. In other words a high degree of fruit bearing is the mark of one who is a disciple in the fullest sense of the word.

5. 15:9-10 – To abide in Christ is to abide or live in His love by obeying His commandments as given in the New Testament. By doing this we follow the model or example of Christ who obeyed His Father’s commandments and by doing so abided or lived in the love of His Father.

6. 15:11 – “These things I have spoken” has reference to the things Jesus had spoken to His disciples on this last evening prior to His death. By inference for us “these things I have spoken” would focus on these items from God’s word. These teachings from God’s word concerning the need for Christ to go away and send the Holy Spirit, His modeling what it means to be a servant-leader, the need for obedience, the Holy Spirit’s help and fruitfulness are teachings that help us to be joyful believers by:

- a. Christ’s joy being in us.
- b. our joy being full or at its peak.

7. 15:12 – This is Christ’s summary commandment that we as believers:

- a. love one another as believers
- b. that we love one another sacrificially as Christ has loved us.

To be sure there are other very specific commandments in the New Testament, but they are all related to this summary commandment. 2 John 1:5-6 explains that the commandment to love one another actually is defined by obedience to all of Christ’s commandments whether given during His earthly ministry (John 14:26) or through the Apostles in the rest of the New Testament (John 16:12-15).

8. 15:13-15 – Friendship with Christ is an essential part of what is needed to be fruitful believers. Christ is not saying that the greatest love one can have is dying for friends because He even died for ungodly sinners (Romans 5:6, 8). What Christ is saying that of all the possible actions one can do to show love for a friend, there is none that is greater

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than to lay down His life. When Christ speaks of laying down His life, He is showing that His death is totally voluntary and that no one could take His life from Him (John 10:17- 18). The condition for being a friend of Christ is to obey His commandments. This is not to be confused with the condition for becoming a believer which is simply to believe in or trust in Christ (John 3:18, 36; 6:47). When we are obeying Christ's commandments we are not simply servants or slaves but are friends. A slave or servant is not totally aware of what His master is doing. He has only a limited knowledge. A friend, on the other hand, is much more knowledgeable about what His friend is doing. In the discussion in Galatians 4:1-7, Paul contrasts being a child of God with being an adult son of God. He states in Galatians 4:1-3 that a child is no different from a servant or slave but is under very basic rules with greater restriction of liberty. An adult son is not under so much restriction but has less restriction of liberty and more knowledge of His father's purpose. We as New Testament believers have a greater knowledge of God's working and purpose than those under the Old Testament. When we obey His word, this becomes even greater because we are on a friendship basis with Christ. This means greater disclosure of Himself to us by Christ. Our ability to understand these things and to know them in a helpful way is very much related to our obedience. Notice the same thought in John 8:31- 32 where we learn that if we abide in Christ's word we are full disciples and know the truth in such a way that it frees us from sin's power. Our choice is to live exclusively as a servant or slave and be very limited in our understanding of Christ or to live as a friend and have a greater understanding of Christ's purpose and working.

9. 15:16 - The choice of believers mentioned here is not one of salvation. Jesus is addressing the Apostles (Luke 6:13; Mark 3:13-14). This choice also included Judas Iscariot (John 6:64, 70-71). In the same way our place in the body of Christ is not because of our choice to trust Christ. This place is sovereignly assigned to us the moment we trust Christ for salvation and are baptized by the Holy Spirit not only into Christ's body but into a specific part of that body which corresponds to our spiritual gift(s) (1 Corinthians 12:11-13, 18). Certainly the Apostles had chosen to trust Christ for salvation earlier, but they were not actually chosen as Apostles until later in His ministry. Keep in mind that the spiritual gift of Apostle was not given until after Christ ascended (Ephesians 4:7-11). Prior to that time, Apostleship existed only as an office and not as a spiritual gift. Not only did Jesus appoint these twelve but He appointed them to go and bear fruit and not just to bear fruit but that this fruit should remain. Notice that in Mark 3:13-14 Jesus appointed them to be with Him, to be sent out to preach and to have authority to cast out demons. We as believers are chosen and appointed for the purpose of bearing fruit and that our fruit might remain or have a lasting impact. Jesus chose them for a mission and service just as He does us so that whatever we ask the Father in His name for that mission or ministry, He will do.

10. 15:17 – Christ reminds the Apostles and us that His summary command for us as believers is to love one another.

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B. The opposition of the world (John 15:18 – 16:6)

1. 15:18-19 - The word "if" is a first class condition and probably would be better translated as "since." It is an established fact that the world (those outside of Christ) hate genuine believers. This hatred may show itself in the form of imprisonment or killing as in Revelation 2:10, taking believers' material possessions (Acts 10:34), and physical assault (2 Corinthians 11:23-25). While these involve extreme expressions of hatred, more frequently hatred is shown by emotions or speech in opposition to us, being ostracized or excluded from their company or friendship, being insulted and being considered by some as bad or evil because of the living out of our relationship to Christ (Luke 6:22). As we experience this hatred from the world, we are to know or remember that the world hated Christ prior to their hating of true believers. Isaiah 53:3 predicted that Christ would be one who was despised and rejected or forsaken by men, that Christ would be a person that many would not want to be around because of His sorrow and His readiness to be around people who were hurting, that Christ would be one whom many people would prefer to avoid or ignore, and certainly one that people would not esteem or consider Him important. This gives us great insight into the meaning of hatred as we see people simply would avoid or ignore Him because of what He stood for. The word "if" in verse 19 is a second class condition meaning "If you were of the world" (and you are not). If believers were of the world (this order or arrangement outside of Christ), the people outside of Christ would love or befriend them. Since Christ chose us out of the world, this gives them their reason for hating us in some form. This choice of Christ occurred prior to the creation of the world (Ephesians 1:4) and relates to our salvation. This choice became obvious when we placed our faith in Christ and openly identified with the people of God. For this reason the world hates or is antagonistic toward believers.

2. 15:20-21 – We are slaves and Christ is our master. Christ reminds us of His word that as slaves we are not greater or more privileged than our master Christ. Since Christ was persecuted because of whom He was, we will also be persecuted. Christ then makes an astounding statement. Assuming anyone kept His word, they would keep the word of the Apostles as recorded in New Testament. When we give out God's word, it will either be rejected (Acts 13:46) or it will be received as God's word (1 Thessalonians 2:13). All these things (the hatred and the persecution) would be done to believers because of their identity with Christ and because the persecutors do not know God the Father (John 8:19, 55).

3. 15:22 - The word "if" is a second class condition. What this means is that the statements that Christ made are contrary to fact. It works like this: If He had not come into the world (but in fact He did come) and if He had not spoken to the world (but in fact He has spoken), the world would not be guilty of sin (but it is guilty).

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Therefore, two things make the world guilty before God:

- a. Christ has come into the world (cp. John 1:10).
- b. Christ has spoken to the world (John 3:19-21).

The point that Christ makes is that if He had not done so, the world would have no sin particularly the sin of unbelief in Christ (John 16:8-9). Christ's presence and His word leave the world without excuse.

4. 15:23 - To hate Christ is to hate the Father (see also John 5:23; 8:40-42; 12:44; 1 John 2:23).

5. 15:24-25 - Not only does Christ's having come to this earth and spoken His word condemn the world but His works or miracles also condemn the world. The works Christ did were very unique and had not been done by anyone else. The response of the world was to see Him do these things publicly (and in a way that could be verified) and hate Him. Because they hated Him, they hated His Father. In John 14:10, 11 Jesus had challenged His own to believe Him in regard to His identity with the Father even because of the works He did. Jesus did miracles no one else had ever done (Matthew 12:22-24; 9:32-34; John 9:32-33). They hated Christ because their works were evil (John 3:19-21; John 7:7). As we shed the light of Christ's life by living a life of good works, it shouts to the world that it is evil and under God's judgment (Ephesians 5:8-12). For this reason the world hates us because this is not what they want to hear. The world's hatred of Christ and His followers is a fulfillment of Psalm 35:19; 69:4. It shows their reason for hating us is without cause and shows how real God's word is.

6. 15:26-27 - Jesus had referred to the Holy Spirit as a helper in the matter of obeying Christ's commandments (John 14:15-16). Jesus makes it clear that the Holy Spirit will also be a helper in the believer's battle with the hatred of the world. Christ tells us when this helper comes - not if He comes. He came on the day of Pentecost. Christ states that He will send the Holy Spirit from the Father. The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth. As noted before, the scripture teaches that there are three entities that are truth: Jesus Himself (John 14:6); God's word (John 17:17); and the Holy Spirit Himself (1 John 5:7). It is not surprising that the Holy Spirit is truth because He produced the scriptures which are truth. Since the chief subject of scripture is Jesus Christ (Luke 24:27, 44-45; John 5:39; 16:12-15), it is not surprising that He is the truth. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would bear witness or testify of Christ. The Apostles themselves and by inference believers themselves are involved in bearing witness or testifying of Jesus Christ. The Apostles were especially important because they had been with Christ from the beginning. Acts 1:21-22 shows us that this testimony would be concerning Christ's resurrection. Beware of any tendency to emphasize the Holy Spirit. Remember the Holy Spirit is here to testify of Christ not Himself. The Holy Spirit's witness or testimony would be through believers as they present Christ to others and through the apostolic circle in guiding them in the recording of the New Testament scriptures.

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7. 16:1-6 –

- a. 16:1 - Jesus has spoken of His departure, the Holy Spirit's coming and the world's hatred and opposition so that we will not stumble. The word "stumble" is translated as "shaken in your faith" by the New Jerusalem Bible, "staggered" by the Living Bible, and "breakdown of your faith" by the New English Bible. One of the purposes of God's word is to keep us from being caught by surprise so we will not panic and dishonor God.
- b. 16:2-3 – Organized popular religion and especially those institutions controlled by counterfeit believers will ostracize true believers. There would be a time coming (fulfilled in their lifetime through our current times) when those who killed true believers would sincerely be convinced that they are offering a service to God. Islamic radicals who murder Christians today or arrange for them to be tried under Islamic law are examples of this. The reason that they do this is that they have not known God the Father or Jesus in a saving way (John 17:3).
- c. 16:4-6 – Jesus gave us here in God's word warning in advance of what type of treatment to expect from the world. When it comes we should remember what God's word says. While Jesus was with them He did not need to tell them about this, but since He is no longer here on earth doing His earthly ministry, it is necessary that we be warned. Jesus was concerned that the disciples were not handling the information concerning His leaving with faith but were letting their emotions, particularly their sorrow keep them from asking the questions they needed to ask about where He was going, what He was going to be doing and what His role would be. When Christ brings us into difficult times, it is important that we do not get caught up in sorrow or other emotions but that we go to His word and respond in faith.

C. The Holy Spirit's help in this world (16:7-15)

- 1. 16:7 - The issue of Christ's departure
 - a. for the believer's advantage
 - b. necessary in order for the Holy Spirit as the helper to be sent.
 - c. Christ promises if He leaves, He will send believers the Holy Spirit.
- 2. 16:8-11 - The Holy Spirit's ministry to the unsaved world
 - a. 16:8-9 - convict or convince the unsaved of sin, especially the sin of unbelief in Christ.
 - b. 16:10 - convict or convince the unsaved of the need for righteousness because Christ will no longer be present to do this ministry.
 - . Christ did this ministry in Luke 5:8; 10:25-37; 18:18-27; John 7:7
 - c. 16:11 -convict or convince the unsaved of the reality of judgment based on the fact that Satan as the ruler of the present order has been judged and, therefore, the present order of things is limited only for a time.

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3. 16:12-15 - The Holy Spirit's ministry in revealing Christ's word
- a. 16:12 - Christ had many more things to tell the Apostles but they were not yet ready for the information to be revealed.
 - b. 16:13a – When the Holy Spirit would come (i.e. at Pentecost), He was to guide them into -not part of the truth - but all the truth
 - (1) This emphasizes that what He revealed to them would be without error and would be totally accurate.
 - (2) They would not be on their own but would be guided by Him in the process.
 - c. 16:13b – The Holy Spirit would not speak on His own initiative.
 - (1) He would speak whatever He heard from Christ who received the information from the Father (16:14-15). He could have spoken on His own initiative but because of the voluntary subordination within the trinity (The Son to the Father and the Holy Spirit to the Father), it is was communicated in this manner so there would be no question in anyone's mind that this information was from God.
 - (2) The Holy Spirit would also disclose to the Apostles information regarding the future.
 - d. 16:14 – The Holy Spirit's ministry would be to glorify Christ not Himself. The activity of the Holy Spirit is centered on glorifying Christ. Beware of those who try to say something is of the Holy Spirit if it points to the Holy Spirit and not to Christ. He would take information from Christ and would disclose it to the Apostles.
 - e. 16:15 – All things that the Father discloses are disclosed to Christ. The Holy Spirit takes what Christ discloses to Him and would disclose it to the Apostles.
 - f. 16:12-15 – Some observations:
 - (1) This passage is often misused to refer to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit. This ministry is referred to in John 14:26 and 1 Corinthians 2:12.
 - (2) This passage is a promise by Christ to disclose or reveal new truth to the Apostles which would be recorded in the rest of the New Testament. These would be the things that Christ would not tell them because they were not able to bear them.
 - (3) John 14:26 tells us that the things Christ had told them during His earthly ministry would be brought to their memory by the Holy Spirit and this is the material recorded in Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and Acts 1:1-8. John 16:12-15 is the material revealed by the Holy Spirit and recorded in the rest of the New Testament by the Apostles or their close associates.

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D. Discussion concerning Christ's resurrection and ascension (John 16:16-33)

1. His resurrection (16:16-22)

a. 16:16 – The statement

- (1) The first "little while" and they would no longer behold Christ or see Him. This refers to the fact that He would be dead within one day.
- (2) The second "little while" refers to a three day period after His death when they would again behold or see Him.

b. 16:17-18 – The disciples' confusion

- (1) The disciples had no idea what Jesus was talking about on three questions:
 - (a) not seeing Him in a little while – His death
 - (b) seeing Him again in a little while – His resurrection
 - (c) His going to the Father – His ascension
- (2) Jesus had already spoken of His death and resurrection on three occasions: Matthew 16:21; 17:22-23; 20:18-19
- (3) Jesus had mentioned His ascension or going to the Father on multiple occasions: John 7:33; 14:12, 28; 16:5-7, 10
- (4) Application: We must learn that the word of God is to be taken in a plain and normal sense. The source of their confusion was trying to make confusion out of what had been plainly spoken. God has given us His word to communicate with us not to confuse us.

c. 16:19-21 – Jesus answered their question on His death and resurrection by using the illustration of childbirth:

- (1) The labor pains are a time of sorrow and difficulty – His death.
- (2) The birth of the child erases much of the anguish and labor pains because of the joy it brings – His resurrection.

d. 16:22 – The idea was that at this present time the disciples were awaiting and then experiencing the death of Christ was going to be a time of sorrow, but when He saw them again at His resurrection, they would experience a joy that no one would be able to take away from them. If we have the death of Christ but do not have the resurrection, we experience sorrow. The truth of the resurrection of Christ is to give us this same joy that cannot be taken away.

2. Christ's ascension (16:23-33)

a. 16:23-28 - In relation to prayer – This section obviously anticipates that after His resurrection, there would be a time when He was no longer physically present with them.

b. 16:23-24 – The disciples had been speaking to Jesus directly about their questions and concerns but now, they would no longer be doing so. We are to ask in Jesus' name. Of course, this includes the other conditions for answered prayer such as faith (Matthew 21:22), and asking according to God's will

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(1 John 5:14), giving us only what is good (Matthew 7:11). The promise is that He will give us: anything we ask and possibility of full or complete joy.

- c. 16:25 – Christ promised them that He would speak with fewer figures of speech but speak more plainly to them about the Father and what He is like.
- d. 16:26a – He reminds the disciples and us by extension of the need to ask in Christ's name.
- e. 16:26b-27 – He explains that it will not be necessary for Him to make request of the Father for us when we ask in His name because the Father loves those of us who are believers because we have loved Christ and believed that He was sent by the Father. Prior to Christ going to the cross, this was the content of saving faith since His death and resurrection had not yet occurred (John 5:24; 12:44; 17:8).
- f. 16:28 – Note the sequence:
 - (1) There was a time when Christ was with the Father and not in the world. This speaks of His pre-existence (John 1:1-3; 17:5, 24).
 - (2) There was a time when Christ came into the world (John 1:14; Hebrews 1:6).
 - (3) There was to be a time when Christ would leave the world. This spoke of His ascension (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11).
 - (4) There was to be a time when Christ would again be with the Father and not in the world physically present with His own. This spoke of His present session at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us (Romans 8:34) and to act as our advocate (=speak to the Father in our defense, 1 John 2:1).
- g. 16:29 – The disciples obviously did not yet understand about His death and resurrection (cp. Luke 24:5-11, 18-27, 36, 41). What they did understand plainly were the truths listed in verse 28.
- h. 16:30 – In addition they understood that Jesus was all-knowing and therefore God and was speaking so plainly that no one needed to keep on questioning Him. This also moved them to keep on believing that Christ came from God.
- i. 16:31 – Jesus pressed them about the reality of their faith in view of the difficult hours ahead. He did this by asking them if they now really did believe.
- j. 16:32 – The extent of the difficulty
 - (1) temporary division and disunity
 - (2) abandon Christ: True believers can fail to trust Christ for the ability to handle difficulties and fail to walk in fellowship with Him. This does not deal with their trust for salvation.
 - (3) Christ emphasized He was not alone but that God was with Him. In the same way Christ is with us always (Matthew 28:20) yet this does not prevent difficulties (Matthew 8:23-27).

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k. John 16:33 – We are both in Christ and in the world. Therefore, we will face problems or tribulation. Yet at the same time as we face these problems we can experience peace or freedom from worry. Jesus spoke these things (=God's word) that in Him we might possibly have peace. Whether we experience this peace or not depends on our obedience to God's word (Isaiah 48:18), our conscious choice to abandon worry and pray specifically and with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6-7), and our faith (Isaiah 26:3). When we fail to hear God's word, we cut off the possibility of real God-given peace. We are commanded to be courageous in facing troubles because Christ has overcome the world. The victory has been won and when Christ returns, everyone will know it, and we know it by faith now. Because Christ has overcome, so have we. We need to live like overcomers and not like succubers.

E. Christ's prayer (John 17:1-26)

1. Christ's prayer for Himself (17:1-5)

a. 17:1

- (1) Recognition that the hour or time had come for Him to accomplish the mission for which the Father had sent Him. Previously, it had not yet been the time (John 2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20) for Him to go to the cross.
- (2) John 13:1 states that this time or hour also included His resurrection and ascension by which He would leave the world. John 12:23 states that this is the time or hour that Jesus would be glorified.
- (3) In turn Jesus through His finished and ongoing work would glorify God.

b. 17:2 – Jesus was given this authority over all mankind:

- (1) To give eternal life to all people whom God gave Him.
- (2) By comparing John 6:37 with John 6:45. We see that all people are taught by God (see also John 1:9), but only those who have heard and learned from God come to Christ. These are the ones given by God to Christ. Keep in mind that learning involves a change of mind toward God. Otherwise we have not learned (Luke 6:40).

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- c. 17:3 – Jesus’ definition of eternal life:
 - (1) To know the God of the Bible as the only true God (cp. Jeremiah 10:10-12).
 - (2) To know Jesus Christ as the one God sent.
 - (3) There are three levels of knowledge in reference to knowing God and Jesus Christ:
 - (a) To know about God (Romans 1:21) and Christ (2 Corinthians 5:16). This is not eternal life or salvation.
 - (b) For salvation or eternal life, to know God (1 Corinthians 1:21) and Christ (John 8:19). Notice that you cannot know God unless you know Jesus Christ. This is the type of knowledge spoken of in John 17:3.
 - (c) For abundant life, we know Christ (Philippians 3:10-11) and God the Father (Colossians 1:10) in a more intimate way by entering into the sufferings of Christ and His resurrection power. This is something in which we must continually grow (2 Peter 3:18).
 - d. 17:4 – Jesus glorified the Father on earth through His miracles (Matthew 9:6-8; 15:29-31) and through His sacrificial death on the cross where He finished the work the Father had for Him (John 19:30; Hebrews 9:26,28; 10:11-12).
 - e. 17:5 - Christ prays to have the glory which He forever kept on having with God even before creation. This was His glory as God that Jesus had set aside for the most part during His earthly ministry although He revealed it at times when He turned the water into wine (John 2:11) and when He showed it to Peter, James and John on the mount of transfiguration.(Luke 9:28-32).
2. Christ’s prayer for His disciples
- a. 17:6
 - (1) Christ manifested or revealed the Father’s name to the disciples. This means He clearly showed them what God was like (John 1:18; 14:8-9).
 - (2) The disciples are described:
 - (a) The Father’s gift to Christ from out of this world (see note on John 17:2 at b(2) under 1.
 - (b) They are said to have kept Christ’s word (cp. John 8:51). This refers to His requirement to savingly believe in Him.

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b. 17:7-8

- (1) The disciples possessed assurance that everything that God had given to Christ was from the Father Himself.
- (2) Reasons that the disciples possessed this assurance:
 - (a) Christ was faithful to give the words the Father had given Him to these disciples.
 - (b) The disciples received these words. This means they received them as God's words and not as the words of a mere man (see 1 Thessalonians 2:13).
 - (c) They understood that Christ had come from the Father.
 - (d) The content of their belief was that God had sent Christ.

c. 17:9-10

- (1) Christ does not intercede for the world, i.e. the unsaved.
- (2) Christ does intercede for His own.
- (3) Christ acknowledges God's ownership of us and of us being a gift from the Father so that there is joint ownership of us by Christ and the Father.
- (4) Christ is said to be glorified in us as God fulfills every desire we have to do good and to show our faith by its works (2 Thessalonians 1:11-12). He was glorified in the lives of these disciples in the same way.

d. 17:11-12

- (1) In 17:13 we see that this prayer was uttered while He was still in the world. It is obvious that this prayer anticipates the fact that Jesus will be in heaven praying for us in this manner following His death, resurrection and ascension. His statement that He is no more in the world shows this. His statement that He is coming to God also supports this view.
- (2) It is equally obvious that the disciples then as we are now would be in the world.
- (3) Christ asks the Father to keep the disciples saved in His name or authority. This was the same name and authority that the Father had given Christ.
- (4) The purpose of Christ asking the Father to keep the disciples saved was so that they would be one just as the Father and Son are one. Note this is not organizational oneness but oneness in Christ. This prayer was answered on Pentecost when the disciples were baptized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13).

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- (5) In 17:12 Christ makes it clear that He used the name or authority of God to keep the disciples saved, even during His earthly ministry. In this work of guarding the disciples the only one who was lost was Judas Iscariot who is called the “son of perdition.” Judas was never saved to begin with (John 6:64, 70-71). The keeping power of Christ and the Father is for believers only (John 10:28-29). All of this in regard to Judas was to fulfill the scriptures.
- e. 17:13 – The reason Jesus spoke these words to His disciples before His death, resurrection and ascension was so they inwardly would have the fullness or completeness of Christ’s joy. Clearly He was anticipating the time when He would be rejoining the Father in heaven following His death, resurrection and ascension.
- f. 17:14 – 16 Christ had given these disciples and believers following them His word. As always there is that hatred of the world toward believers caused by the fact that they are not of this world even as Christ is not of this world. We are citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20) and are here in this world as aliens and foreigners (1 Peter 2:11) to act as ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). Christ does not ask that we be taken out of the world upon trusting Him. What He does ask is that we be kept from the power of Satan. We are, therefore, in the world but not of it.
- g. 17:17-19
- (1) 17:17 - Christ prays that His disciples and by inference all believers be set apart for God’s purpose in the truth which is defined as God’s word. This shows that Jesus believed the scriptures are without error (see also Matthew 4:4; 5:18; 22:29; John 10:35).
- (2) 17:18 – Christ made it clear that our life purpose is largely identical with His purpose:
- (a) Luke 19:10 – To seek and save those who are lost.
- (b) Mark 10:45 – To serve not to be served and tell others that Christ has ransomed them from sin’s punishment.
- (c) John 6:38 – We are here to do Christ’s will and not our own.
- (3) 17:19 – Christ set Himself apart for God’s purpose to make it possible for us to be set apart for God’s purpose in the truth of God’s word.
3. Christ’s prayer for all believers (John 17:20-26)
- a. 17:20 – Christ prayed not only for His disciples at the time but for those who would believe through their word. This has a number of implications:
- (1) Many of us have come to believe through the word of these original disciples as this is what is penned in the New Testament.
- (2) In addition to writing these letters, they directly told others about Christ and as a result many came to trust Him for salvation.
- (3) It is obvious Christ expects us to share the gospel with others so that they might come to saving faith (cp. Mark 16:15).

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b. 17:21 – Christ’s prayer was that all believers would be one:

- (1) Notice that this was spiritual unity not organizational unity. The unity is to like that between the Father and Son who performing different functions work together in perfect harmony.
- (2) His prayer was that the believers would be in both the Father and the Son. At salvation when the believer is baptized into the spiritual body of Jesus Christ by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13), this forms as Ephesians 4:4 states one body. Galatians 3:28 states that believers are all baptized into Christ Himself so that we are “in Christ.” 1 John 4:15 and John 10:29 would tell us that believers are also in God the Father.
- (3) Since any prayer of Christ is according to God’s will and any prayer according to God’s will is answered positively (1 John 5:14), it follows that Jesus’ prayer was answered. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit makes believers all one body. This oneness has already been created. We do not have to create it.
- (4) The purpose of this oneness is so that it may be possible for the world, i.e. the unsaved, to believe that God sent Christ, i.e. to trust Him for salvation.
- (5) This possibility is best realized as believers demonstrate that unity and love (John 13:34-35) toward one another. Ephesians 4:3 does not tell believers to create the unity of the Spirit. That is already a reality. We are not even commanded to keep that unity. What we are commanded to do is to make every effort to keep that unity. Obviously, the world can see this unity if they read God’s word, but when we show that unity, they see it even better. Remember this unity is living - not organizational - just like the unity between the Father and the Son mentioned in the first part of John 17:21.

c. 17:22-23

- (1) Christ is saying that God’s glory which was given to Him was also given to believers. While Christ possessed God’s glory, He was given God’s glory in another way that we also may be given God’s glory.
- (2) Isaiah 42:8 states that Jehovah or Yahweh will not give His glory to another. The question is: how is this reconciled with John 17:22?
- (3) The answer to that question is that the Holy Spirit, the Father, and the Son all possess this glory. When Jesus did His first miracle in John 2:11, He showed His glory. John 1:14 states that this glory was plainly revealed to the Apostles. The Holy Spirit is also called the Spirit of glory in 1 Peter 4:14 showing that He too is God and possesses this glory.

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF JOHN, CHAPTERS 13 - 17: THE UPPER ROOM AND GARDEN DISCOURSES

- (4) When Jesus was baptized by John, the Holy Spirit came upon Him (Luke 3:22; 4:1, 18). This is the glory given by God the Father to Jesus.
- (5) According to 1 Peter 4:14, this glory rests upon believers and is clearly said to be the Holy Spirit. This occurs when we are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the spiritual body of Christ at the moment of salvation (1 Corinthians 12:13). The Holy Spirit being upon us and baptizing us into Christ is used interchangeably in Acts 1:5 and 1:8. The baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and at conversion after that time answers Jesus' prayer that we may be one living unit just as the Father and the Son are one living unit.
- (6) Not only are believers "in Christ" because of being baptized by the Holy Spirit into Christ and into His body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Galatians 3:26-27), but they are also indwelt by Christ through the Holy Spirit (Colossians 1:27 cp. John 14:16-20).
- (7) The Father is also in Christ (cp. 2 Corinthians 5:19) for the purpose of reconciling the world to Himself. This is a provisional reconciliation (see also Colossians 1:19-20). This reconciliation is accomplished through the cross and sets up a bridge between a holy God and sinful man. This bridge is only crossed by sinful man through faith in Christ. In other words this bridge is available to all men but does them no good until they actually cross it by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.
- (8) The purpose of this 3 fold work of His glory being given us through the baptism of the Spirit, His indwelling believers through the Holy Spirit and the Father indwelling Christ is so that believers may be perfected or completed in unity. The Greek word translated "perfected" is in the perfect tense meaning that the act took place at a definite point in the past with ongoing results.
- (9) The purpose of believers being made a complete unity is so that the world may possibly know these two facts:
 - (a) God sent Christ
 - (b) God's love for believers is as great as His love for Christ Himself.
 - (c) The more that believers show that unity in their behavior, the more powerfully will these realities be communicated to the unbelieving world.

NOTES ON THE BOOK OF JOHN, CHAPTERS 13 - 17: THE UPPER ROOM AND GARDEN DISCOURSES

d. 17:24

- (1) Jesus declared that it was His will that those whom the Father had given Him (= believers - John 6:45 cp. 6:37) be with Christ where He is in heaven. This prayer is answered when a believer dies and goes to be with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:23) or if he is one of those who escape death, he will be caught up to be with Christ (John 14:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17).
- (2) This does not speak of Christ's glory which He possessed as God (cp. 17:5). This speaks of the glory that was given Him and which was given to believers, i.e. the Holy Spirit (see comments on 17:22-23 above). The purpose is so that they can behold Christ's God-given glory, i.e. the Holy Spirit. According to John 14:17, believers know the Holy Spirit while the unbelieving world does not know Him or behold Him. We will behold Him in heaven. The Greek word for "behold" means to study to look at something or someone so that we know their importance.
- (3) Jesus prays this prayer as His will for us as believers because God the Father has loved Him (Jesus) even before creation).

e. 17:25-26

- (1) Jesus praises the Father as righteous which we should also do (Psalm 92:15; Deuteronomy 32:4; Job 34:10).
- (2) Jesus states that the unbelieving world does not know God (John 17:3; 1 Corinthians 1:21).
- (3) In contrast to the world:
 - (a) Jesus knows the Father.
 - (b) Believers know that Jesus was sent by the Father (cp. 8:19).
- (4) Christ had made God's name or reputation known to believers during His earthly ministry (John 1:18) and promised that He would make it known even more after His earthly ministry. This is part of the "things you cannot now bear" that would be revealed later by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and their associates (John 16:12-15).
- (5) The purpose of Christ revealing the name or reputation of the Father to believers while on earth and following His earthly ministry was so that the quality of love that the Father had for Jesus might be in us as believers. This is answered in Romans 5:5 where it states that God's kind of love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Not only would this special love be in us but Christ Himself through the indwelling Holy Spirit would be in us (see note 5(c) on John 14:20 on p. 7).
- (6) Much of what we do as believers is a result of Christ's prayer being answered by God. This includes our capacity to love and live out the oneness we have in Christ through the Holy Spirit.