

JOHN

Chapter 17

Jesus Prays for Himself

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

17:1–26 Jesus’ longest recorded prayer. (CSB)

17:1-11 This chapter is the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus. The portion considered here explores Jesus’ thoughts about Himself and His disciples. It is a prayer Jesus wanted His disciples to hear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

Today is a pivotal Sunday, standing as it does between Ascension and Pentecost. Christ has ascended, but has not yet sent the Spirit. Our text is from Jesus’ high priestly prayer, a magnificent intercession in which Christ at times speaks as if he has already fulfilled his mission and departed from this earth—hence its selection in the lectionary for this Sunday. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The prayer may be visualized as a series of concentric circles expanding outward. Our Lord first prays for himself, that the Father may glorify his Son, so that the Son may in turn glorify the Father. In language typical of the theology of the cross, the term “glorify” paradoxically refers to the ignominy of his crucifixion. That horrible, shameful event is the hour of Christ’s glory, through which he glorifies the Father by fulfilling the will of him who sent him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The circle expands as Christ then intercedes specifically for the elect—those the Father has given him—and explicitly not for the world at large (v 9). If we take the past-tense verbs literally, Christ is praying for the disciples, who had already received his Word and believed that he was sent from the Father. (If the aorist verbs are gnomic—timeless—then the intercessions apply equally well to disciples today.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Later in the prayer, after our text, the circle expands further as Christ prays also for those who would come to believe through the disciples' word (v 20). Jesus is not only praying for those disciples gathered around the Passover table with him, but also for all disciples everywhere of all times, who, baptized in the triune name (cf. v 6), gather at his holy Table, receive his Word, and do his work "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent" (In 6:28). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Jesus deliberately prays to his Father in the presence of his disciples. He wants them to hear his prayer requests, which directly apply to them. They are about to go through a tremendous shock—his death, resurrection, and then his departure. They need this prayer, as do we. How encouraging for us to know that no matter what we go through, Jesus is with us, because we belong to him. "No one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (Jn 10:28–29). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

The character of this intercession is profound beyond description, possessing an eternal, timeless quality. It offers a glimpse into the communion between the Father and Son, a communion in which we participate, thanks to the intercessory work and prayer of Christ. As in most of John's gospel, the Greek text is deceptively easy and simple, while theologically sublime. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

17:1 This verse marks the division between the discourse and the prayer. Jesus lifts His eyes to heaven. The hour has come for the Father to glorify the Son by investing the human nature of Jesus with the full use of the divine power. The time has also come for the Son to glorify the Father by His entire activity of obedience. The Son glorifies the Father in the world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

he looked toward heaven. The customary attitude in prayer (11:41; Ps 123:1; Mk 7:34), though sometimes the person prostrated himself (see Mt 26:39). (CSB)

The last thing Jesus did before leaving for the Garden of Gethsemane was lift His eyes heavenward and pray aloud to God the Father. This prayer has been called Jesus' high priestly prayer because with it Jesus functioned as high priest and interceded to the Father, for the disciples first and then for all believers. It was a prayer such as only the Son of God could pray, truly the Lord's prayer. (PBC)

AND PRAYED – Jesus frequently went off to pray privately. Early in His ministry, after a particular long and busy day, Jesus rose early the next morning and "went off to a solitary place, where He prayed" (Mark 1:35). In the Sermon on the Mount, after He had condemned the pharisaic prayer life of many of the religious leaders of the Jews, Jesus countered by saying: "This is how you

should pray” (Matthew 6:9), and He taught them the Lord’s Prayer. It is no wonder that Jesus spent much time in prayer. He had come, He insisted constantly, not to do His will but the will of His Father (Matthew 11:27; John 8:27-29). In order to do this, Jesus needed to be in constant communication with His Father, always moving toward the completion of His act of salvation for the sins of the world. (LifeLight)

Father. Used of God in John’s Gospel 122 times. (CSB)

Martin Luther, perhaps reflecting the way the medieval church of his time depicted the Father as an awesome and fearful judge, wrote in the Small Catechism, “With these words God’s tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.” The fact that the Son Himself not only addresses God in this familiar way but also invites us to do the same in the Lord’s Prayer tells us something about the Father’s attitude of love toward His people. It also tells us what we need to know before we pray: the Father Himself wants us to pray to Him, He listens to His dear children, and He answers our prayers according to His good and gracious will for our lives and welfare. (PBC)

the time. See note on 2:4. – This covers his suffering, death, resurrection and ascension. This contrasts with what Jesus had said in 2:4. (CSB)

elēluthen hē hōra; doxason sou ton huion. The hour had come for the Son to be glorified by being sacrificed. God’s glory involves divine anguish, Christ bearing the Father’s wrath against sin. It also includes resurrection and ascension, where the Son would be ultimately glorified, his human nature being “assumed into fellowship with the Trinity” (Martin Chemnitz, *The Two Natures in Christ*, trans. J. A. O. Preus [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971], 390). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Jesus began by praying for Himself and the mission set before Him. He acknowledged that the time had come for culmination of His ministry and the fulfillment of His purpose. (PBC)

“Father, the time has come.” This contrasts with earlier statements that the hour had not yet come (In 2:4). With these words, you can almost hear Jesus say, “Well, Father, here we go. I’m about to complete the work you gave me. As we head down the final stretch, to you be the glory.” The disciples see God’s glory as the Son glorifies the Father (Jn 1:14). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Jesus prays “Father the time has come” (John 17:1). As John wrote his gospel, He was fully aware of the time that hovered over the entire earthly life of Jesus. “in the beginning was the Word” (1:1) are the words that begin John’s gospel, referring to the eternal dimension of the Son of God. Yet time was not an enemy

for Jesus or something that could not be controlled – as we cannot control the passage of time. Instead, Jesus frequently states: “My time has not yet come” (John 2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20). This expression reminds us that the entire act of salvation had its own timetable, which was not subject to the constraints and demand of people but reflected God’s own will and plan. (LifeLight)

Glorify ... glorify. See notes on 1:14; 7:39; 13:31. The glory of the Father and that of the Son are closely connected, and the death by which Jesus would glorify God would lead to eternal life for believers (v. 2). (CSB)

John’s gospel uses the noun *doxa*, “glory,” 18 times and the verb *doxazō*, “glorify,” 23 times. Like “truth,” “glory” is closely associated with God’s grace in Christ. John introduces the concept by saying God’s glory is seen in Jesus, the Word made flesh, whose glory is “glory of the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14 literally). Compared to secular literature, John’s distinctive emphasis is that glory is seen in lowly service (Leon Morris, *Expository Reflections on the Gospel of John*). The cross is the place to see such glory. Thus glory is prominent in the prayer of John 17 just before the cross, the lowliest of lowly service and therefore the most splendid revelation of glory. See also v 4: “I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do.” The verb *teleioō*, “to complete,” is related to *teleō*, “to finish, complete” in Jesus’ word from the cross, “It is finished” (Jn 19:30). This emphasis ties in with the Epistle (1 Pet 5:5–6): God gives grace to the humble; humble yourself and God will lift you up. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

doxasēi se. The words for “glorify” are identical but differing in meaning. This “to glorify” means the dissemination of the Gospel everywhere to the end of the age. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

The glorification would take place on the cross. (TLSB)

Through Jesus death he would be glorified because he would lead many to eternal life – The Son could only do so because the Father glorified the Son. – In praying for God the Father to glorify Him, Jesus was praying for the successful outcome of His work of salvation. The glory would come with Jesus’ victory on the cross over sin and Satan, would become manifest in His resurrection and ascension, and would be made full in heaven. It would follow close upon the darkness of the cross. When the disciples saw Jesus alive after the grave, they saw that glory, “the glory of the One and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (1:14). (PBC)

17:2 *granted.* The thought of giving is stressed in this chapter (vv. 4, 6–9, 11–12, 14, 22, 24); see note on 3:27. (CSB)

This was a reminder for the disciples that he had power over spiritual life and death because of his saving work on behalf of mankind.

John uses *didōmi*, "to give," 75 times in his gospel, but uses *charis*, "grace," only 4 times (1:14, 16–17). Expositors have noted that John uses "to give" much like Paul uses "grace." The gift God gives, by his grace, is eternal life. While eternal life continues on in heaven, we do not have to die before receiving it, for it starts in the new birth of water and the Spirit (Jn 3:5–6), and is a present reality for those who believe that Jesus is the Christ (Jn 20:31; cf. also I Tim 6:12). Eternal life denotes a quality or kind of life (as well as its duration); Jesus came that we may have life abundantly (Jn 10:10). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

Jesus and the Father are together in the mission of salvation. The Son has been given authority over all flesh in his human nature. The Son has authority to give eternal life. Eternal life is a gift. He also has the authority for judgment. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

authority over all flesh. Christ rules over all people. (TLSB)

ALL PEOPLE – This revelation of this glory was integrally bound with His mission for "all people" (Literally, "all flesh"). He won eternal life for everyone. (PBC)

that he might give eternal life. See note on 3:15. (CSB)

Jesus' teachings are simple and consistent. His words spiral and bring us back again to the all-sufficient, saving truth. All who believe in Jesus as God's Son have eternal life. (PBC)

those you have given him.† Again God's gift of salvation is stressed. (CSB)

Jesus reminds the disciples (and us) that he is God. He has been granted authority over all flesh, to give all believers eternal life (cf. *exousia*, "authority" also in 1:12, where N1V translates it "right"). He and the Father share the same glory (vv 5,10; Jn 1:1, 2). He came from the Father, he is the "sent one," the Apostle (v 8; the final verb is the one from which "apostle" comes). He and the Father are one (v 11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

hina pan ho dedōkas autōi dōsēi autois zōēn aiōnion. The Son freely gives eternal life to each whom the Father has given him for eternal perseverance. According to particular election (J. T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics* [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934, 1955], 589), the Father chooses certain ones to be his and gives them to his Son before time, bringing them to saving faith in time (cf. Acts 13:48; Rom 8:29–30; Titus 1:1). "He ordained in His eternal purpose what cannot fail or be overthrown. He placed salvation for safekeeping in the almighty hand of our Savior, Jesus Christ, from which no one can snatch us" (FC SD XI 46). Again, "Election is a cause of faith and salvation" (F. Bente,

Historical Introductions to the Lutheran Confessions [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005], 472). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)
Jesus doesn't want us to forget to whom we belong: (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Believers in Christ do not come to Him by their own power, God brings them to Him. (TLSB)

Believers in Christ know from this prayer that they have eternal life. (PBC)

17:3 Jesus summarizes two key points: (1) to know God is eternal life, and (2) knowledge of the true God cannot be separated from Christ, who is the only access to such knowledge (cf. 14:6-7). (TLSB)

hautē de estin hē aiōnios zōē hina ginōskōsin se ton monon alēthinon theon.
Those who love the Father and the Son are known by them forever (cf. 1 Cor 8:3). Believing that the Father is the true God and that Jesus Christ is the one the Father has sent and the true God (cf. 1 Jn 5:20; Jn 1:18, "The only God, who is at the Father's side"), one has eternal life (cf. Jn 6:33–40, 47). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

MAY KNOW – Eternal life is knowing the true God. The two most common Greek verbs for "to know" occur more often in John than in any other NT book (57 of the 222 occurrences of *ginōskō*, and 84 of 318 for *oida*). For John, knowing is a transforming experience. The gift of knowing God ushers the believer into a new quality of life, unlike anything else in this world—a heavenly life that lasts forever. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

St. Bernard of Clairvaux: "Knowledge then is the fruit of faith, perfect charity of hope... Understanding and love, that is, the knowledge of and delight in the truth, are perhaps, as it were, the two arms of the soul, with which it embraces and comprehends with all saints the length and breadth, the height and depth, that is the eternity, the love, the goodness, and the wisdom of God" (SLSB, p. 37). (TLSB)

How clearly Jesus spells out what eternal life is all about to know the Father by knowing: the one he has sent (cf. 14:6). To "know" is much more than to recognize some facts. It is to keep God's Word (v 6), i.e., to believe, be conformed to, and follow the Word (*tēreō* reflects Hebrew *shamar*, the word used so often for both God and his people keeping the covenant; NIV's "obey" has Reformed overtones). It is to receive and believe God's words to us through Christ (v 8); to be one with Christ and the Father (v 11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

ONLY TRUE GOD – The pagans around them and us cannot say this because they don't worship the true God or have many gods.

False teachers have abused this passage, using it to question whether Jesus was true God. (TLSB)

Athanasius: “Now had (Jesus) been a creature, He would not have added this, and ranked Himself with His Creator (for what fellowship is there between the True and the not true?); but as it is by adding Himself to the Father, He has shown that He is the Father’s nature; and He has given us to know that of the True Father He is the True Offspring. And John too, as he had learned, so he teaches this, writing in his Epistle, ‘And we are in the True, even in His Son Jesus Christ; This is the True God and eternal life’” (NPNF2 4:398). (TLSB)

Hilary of Poitiers: “If... the Father is the only true God, Christ is not outside the only true God, since the Father, Who is the only true God, glorifies in Himself Christ (cf. 13:32; 14:10; 17:5)” (NPNF2 9:169). (TLSB)

This is what it means to have the gift of eternal life. The Father is the only God and Jesus is the Christ. This is not say that the Father is God but the Son is not God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 15, Part 2)

sent. Again the mission of Jesus is mentioned. (CSB)

17:4 *I have brought you glory.* Christ’s mission was not self-centered. – Only Jesus can make this statement. (CSB)

The first three verses speak about what Jesus will do after He is glorified. Verses 4-5 speak about what Jesus has done. The shift is from third person to first person. Jesus brought glory to the Father on earth and will continue by the Father’s side in heaven. While Jesus entire work on earth was to bring redemption to man, it was also to glorify the Father. The crowning point is Jesus’ atoning death. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

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egō se edoxasa epi tēs gēs. The Son did so during his humiliation by accomplishing all that the Father commanded him. He lived the perfect life in the stead of sinners; he forgave sins in his words and Passion; he overthrew death in his resurrection; he ascended as the Church’s firstfruits. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

the work you gave me. Jesus emphasized the supreme place of the Father. (CSB)

17:5 *glorify me ... with the glory I had with you.* Jesus asks the Father to return him to his previous position of glory, to exchange humiliation for glorification. This occurred at Christ's resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand. (CSB)

After the earthly part is finished, the heavenly part can begin. Jesus' primary concern was always the glorification of the Father. Jesus is not requesting an award for His work. Jesus is glorified so that He can continue to glorify the Father and so He can bring to eternal life all the Father has given Him. He is to receive the glory He shared before the world was created. He wants to be glorified according to His human nature. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

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kai nun doxason me su, pater. Jesus asks in the hearing of the Eleven that he would now, following the Passion, be elevated bodily to the right hand of his Father, to rule the Church, inhabiting her with his life-giving flesh in his Word and treasured Sacraments, keeping the Church in his Father's name. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

tēi doxēi hēi eichon . . . para soi. Jesus' flesh would now be exalted where it would have the same glory that his divinity always had. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

world. The universe (see notes on v. 14; 1:10). "World" occurs 18 times in this prayer. (CSB)

The whole point of this verse is that God is asked to glorify Jesus by glorifying his human nature with the divine glory which he had from eternity and had also in the state of humiliation.

before the world existed. Preincarnate glory with the Father. Christ is eternal and thus existed before the world was made. (TLSB)

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

6 "I have revealed you ^a to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷ Now

they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name—the name you gave me—so that they may be one as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled. ¹³ “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

17:6 *I have revealed you.* See NIV text note and notes on 2:23; 14:13; cf. 1:18. — God’s name is the revelation of God himself. It is the triune name placed on us in Baptism. (CSB)

God’s name is the revelation of God himself. It is the triune name placed on us in Baptism. Jesus has done his job as the Word made flesh. He has revealed God to us as the God of grace and truth (1:14–18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Jesus now turns His attention to His disciples. Jesus is voicing His utmost thoughts about the disciples whom He loves. Jesus has succeeded with them. He is proud of them, even though He knows their sins to come. Jesus spoke the Word to His disciples. The disciples have learned and guarded that Word. They have all entered into the new covenant with Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

ephanērōsa sou to onoma tois anthrōpois hous edōkas moi. The disciples have been taught the name of his Father, being his property. Being given to the Son, also, as his property, they, by the power of both Father and Son, have kept the Father’s word by believing Jesus’ word as coming from the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

those whom you gave me. † Again the divine gift (cf. 6:44). (CSB)

Literally, He had revealed the Father’s “name” to them. The “name” of God is everything that reveals Him to us, particularly His Word. And again, it is no

coincidence that Jesus is also called the Word. In Him we know the Father.
(PBC)

Jesus is referring to the disciples still present with Him, the 12 minus Judas (who had left to betray Jesus), the prayer continues. (LifeLight)

HAVE OBEYED YOUR WORD – The disciples sinned often. So do we. It is Jesus' obedience that counts and because of it he constantly forgives us.

That very evening not one of the disciples got up to wash feet. Jesus' words concerning greatness being found in servanthood seemed to fall on deaf ears. Was Jesus seeing something about the disciples that we can't see? No and yes. No, the disciples could claim no breakthroughs in "naming the name" of Jesus or in obeying the will of our Father. But Jesus did not even mention the disciples' failings – failings that were evident and would become even more so as the evening wore on. It is as though they didn't exist, for Jesus was seeing the impact on His disciples of the forgiveness He would win for them and for us on the cross. Jesus' words on His disciples have to be seen in the context of the cross. (LifeLight)

17:7-8 *panta hosa dedōkas moi*. "Everything" refers to the doctrine that the Father has given to his Son (cf. Jn 8:28). *ta hrēmata ha edōkas moi*. What the Father has given (aorist tense) to the Son, the Son has now given (perfect tense) to the disciples, as representative of the entire Church, the completion of the transaction. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

17:7 THEY KNOW – This denotes an intimate, saving knowledge.

everything ... comes from you. Only as people see the Father at work in Jesus do they have a proper concept of God. The disciples had at last reached this understanding. (CSB)

The disciples believed that everything Jesus taught came from the Father.
(Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

This includes Jesus' coming, His entire ministry, His Word and works, His disciples - in short, all that He is, has received, and has done to reveal His Father's love for the world. (TLSB)

17:8 I GAVE THEM Christians know and believe that they become a Christian only because the Father gave them to Jesus.

THE WORDS YOU GAVE ME – *rhēmata* – The exact words directly from God. Three things about the disciples are mentioned: 1. They accepted the teaching (unlike the Pharisees and others who heard it but did not receive it). 2. They knew with certainty Jesus' divine origin. Acceptance of the revelation led

them further into truth. 3. They believed (see note on 1:7; cf. 1:12; 20:31). – Jesus didn't even mention His miracles here. The words made the difference, as they do now for us. (PBC)

In the words of Jesus the disciples heard the very Word of the Father. The job now done, and the disciples did receive the Word. They knew Jesus to the full extent of who He was. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

What a contrast Jesus draws between these disciples and most of the learned religious community, who did not accept him, his teaching, or his divinity (cf. 1:11). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

17:9-10 *erōtō . . . peri hōn dedōkas moi, hoti soi eisin.* Though he prays for those of the world occasionally (cf. Lk 23:34), his focus here is concerning those the Father has given him of all generations. Coupling this with v 10, *kai ta ema panta sa estin kai ta sa ema*, it is clear that the Son has as much ownership of his Church in his fleshly divinity as the Father does in his divinity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

kai dedoxasmai en autois. When a person is brought to trust in Jesus, Jesus is glorified (perfect tense). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

17:9 I PRAY FOR THEM – The disciples were His special charge, and they needed help and strength to face what was coming. (PBC)

not . . . for the world. The only prayer Jesus could pray for the world was that it cease to be worldly (i.e., opposed to God), and this he did pray (vv. 21, 23). (CSB)

Jesus did not pray for the world in its opposition to God, though He loves the world (3:16) and prayed it would be saved through the Word that His witnesses share (vv 20–23). (TLSB)

Jesus is not ungracious when he states that he is not praying for the world. Later he does pray for the world to come to faith and salvation (vv 21, 23), and earlier he affirmed that the world is the object of God's love (3:16). But as a theological term, the world per se represents the forces of evil that oppose God. Its salvation requires it to cease being "the world." Christ focuses his petitions on behalf of those who will be left with the task of transforming the world through the power of the Gospel. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

Here is comfort for those worried about being left behind and forgotten. The disciples did not attach themselves to Jesus of their own will because they liked him; the prior fact is that they were chosen by God. Jesus makes this clear in Jn 6:44, 65; 15:16. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

This is not saying that He is not concerned about the whole world because later he does pray for the whole world. His death and resurrection was for everyone.

17:10 *glorified in them.* Through their fruitful discipleship (cf 15:8). (TLSB)

There is a double possession here. Jesus' possessions are the Father's, and the Father's possessions are Jesus'. Jesus is made great in the hearts of the disciples because they believe that He came from the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

17:11b-19 The text is the middle portion of Jesus' High Priestly Prayer. The prayer itself is set among Jesus' teachings at the Last Supper and immediately prior to his departure for the Garden of Gethsemane. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

According to the paragraphing in Nestle 26th edition, in verses 1-5 Jesus prays for Himself, in verses 6-8 He speaks of what He has done for men, in verses 9-19 He prays specifically for the disciples, in verses 20-23 He prays for the unity of future believers, and in verses 24-26 He prays for the eventual glorification of all believers. The various sections overlap each other. Although verses 9-19 are spoken specifically for the disciples, they apply in their entirety to us today. (Buls)

The disciples must have heard this prayer, called the *Sacerdotal*, or *High-priestly Prayer*. (Buls)

17:11 THEY ARE STILL IN THE WORLD – Now Jesus was going to leave the world and go to the Father, but the disciples had to remain in the world. So Jesus prayed for them, placing them in the Father' care. (PBC)

Holy Father. A form of address found only here in the NT (but cf. 1Pe 1:15–16; Rev 4:8; 6:10). The name suggests both remoteness and nearness; God is both awe-inspiring and loving. (CSB)

"Holy Father" this expression is unique in the Scriptures. "Holy" is applied very frequently to the third person of the Trinity, less often to the Son, and only here to the Father. Not only is He holy in Himself but, like the Son and the Spirit, causes holiness in the life of the believer, as is immediately explained. (Buls)

Jesus is asking the Father to do that which Jesus had been doing all along. The divinity of Jesus is implied. "Them" is the disciples. "Your name" is equivalent to "Your revelation," the Word of God. "To me," Jesus, denotes the human nature of Christ. This usage reminds us of the same at Luke 10:22, where the human nature of Christ is clearly meant. "So that" introduces a purpose clause. "May be" means "to continue to be." "One" denotes a unity, an analogy,

not identity. The unity of Christians among themselves is analogical, not identical, to the unity between Jesus and the Father. (Buls)

Bengel aptly remarks that the unity of Christians is by grace but that the unity of Jesus and the Father is by nature, that is, their consubstantial nature. The unity among Christians is caused by the Father, working through the Word of God, and for which unity Christ prayed. Unity among Christians is not caused by Christians themselves. They discover it among themselves when they compare with each other what they believe and practice. (Buls)

pater hagię, tērēson autous en tōi onomati sou. These words are the summary of John 17, that the Holy Father (one-time usage by the Lord) would keep the disciples of all ages strong in his name, so that the evil one cannot touch them (cf. 1 Jn 5:18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

Here God's name clearly implies His power that saves His followers from the forces of evil. (PBC)

I AM COMING TO YOU - "I am coming to you" is a basic Ascension text. Since Jesus' glorification is secure, emphasis shifts to the welfare of the disciples. See Jn 14:18–19 in last Sunday's Gospel, and today's First Reading. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

PROTECT THEM BY THE POWER OF YOUR NAME – His name is his revelation, his Word.

tērēson "protect, keep under guard, keep firm"; *onomati* "name, title, authority, power"; "name" here signifies the power of the person who bears the name. Jesus, when he was on earth, displayed divine power both in saving the disciples from physical danger (for example, stilling the storm), and in keeping them united. His divine "name" is without peer (Is 9:6; Jer 23:6; Mt 1:21; 18:20; Phil 2:9–41; see also the Second Commandment and meaning and First Petition and meaning in Luther's Small Catechism). R. C. H. Lenski (*St. John's Gospel* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1943] 1136) notes that the Father gave the "name" (revelation, Word) to Jesus so that he, in turn, would give it to his disciples to use in their ministry to the world (Acts 4:10–12). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

The disciples will be exposed to danger after Jesus leaves, so Jesus is asking his Father to protect them (*tērēson autous*, literally "keep them") against all ungodliness. The disciples have been guarding the Word; now Jesus is asking the Father to guard them and keep them in the Word. They cannot lose their connection with the saving name of Jesus. The goal is to keep the disciples one against the world, for they are already one. Oneness is broken by teaching contrary to the true doctrine. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

We are protected by the great “I Am”—the holy, proper name of God (YHWH, Kurios) that Jesus also uses for himself (Jn 8:58; cf. Ex 3:14–15). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 3, Part 2)

God’s “name” is the revelation of his character and qualities. “I have revealed your name” (v 6) is equivalent to “I have revealed you,” because he who has seen the Son has seen the Father (Jn 14:9). The Epistle talks about persecution “because of the name of Christ”—that is, because of all that he is and stands for (1 Pet 4:14). “If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name” (1 Pet 4:16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

hina ōsin hen kathōs hēmeis. That is, they will continue to be one in name, word, and work (cf. Jn 14:10), holding and exercising the one true faith over against all enemies that would divide them. Though this seems impossible, the true Church will, by the Lord’s miraculous power, always be one united entity (cf. v 18). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 21, Part 2)

This is being faithful to Jesus’ revelation of the Father. (TLSB)

The disciples are still in the world, in the midst of unbelievers and enemies of the Gospel. Therefore the earnest petition of Christ is most necessary, that His Father, the Holy Father, that desires to keep His holy name unsullied, would keep the believers in His name, in the confession of His name, in true faith, to the end. Only if the Father Himself takes care of His own, will the spiritual union of the believers in no wise be disturbed or brought to naught. God must keep the believers in the one true faith by the Word of His truth, which reveals and teaches His name. The preservation in faith is the work of God. To Him the believers of all times must look to keep them steadfast in His Word and faith, unto the end, as is His gracious and good will. (Kretzmann)

Jesus will leave, and the disciples will still be in the world. This is the reason for the request. The Holy Father is to guard the disciples from unholiness. When the disciples were under Jesus’ care, they guarded the Word. Now under the Father’s care, they are to be guarded by Him and kept in the Word. The Father is to keep them one. This is an ethic of love and agreement in purpose by staying in the Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 6, Part 2)

that they may be one. The latter part of the prayer strongly emphasizes unity. Here the unity is already given, not something to be achieved. The meaning is “that they continually be one” rather than “that they become one.” The unity is to be like that between the Father and the Son. It is much more than unity of organization, but the church’s present divisions are the result of the failures of Christians. (CSB)

Spiritual unity of the Church. (TLSB)

“That they may be one” means to be unified but without losing individual distinctiveness, blending and interacting with each other without losing uniqueness. Lenski argues that Jesus does not pray for them to become one but to remain one in faith in spite of the dangers that would divide them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

“That they may be one” refers first to the unity of believers with the Father through the Son, since the unity is preserved by the power of the Father’s name, which he gave to his Son. Then it also refers to the communion of saints in the church. Here is visible evidence that God has not left his people on their own. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 6, Part 2)

When the disciples came to faith in Jesus, they became one with him and the Father. This wasn’t the oneness of essence that belonged to the Father and the Son exclusively, and it wasn’t merely an outward unity. It was the spiritual oneness of all who have eternal life in Christ. The entire prayer has the one great burden that we may be preserved on oneness by complete adherence to the Word. (Judas) (PBC)

even as. Gk kathos, also translated “just as” in v 21. A comparison. Whereas the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one in being (Dt 6:4), Christians enjoy only a similar unity, as the Gk shows. Ancient and modern false teachers have badly muddled Jesus’ words by overlooking this and arguing that the Father and Son have a unity only of will and works, not of being. Beware such false doctrine! (TLSB)

17:12 *I protected them.* Christ’s power is adequate for every need. (CSB)

During the three and one-half years of His public ministry Jesus was constantly doing what He now asks the Father to do. Note emphatic "I," the God-man. "Was with them" denotes constant and continued action. Note the repetition of words from 11. (Buls)

But Jesus adds something: "I protected them" A participle, not translated here, means "furthermore." Notice "protect" and "preserved." He protected them from loss as becomes clear in the following words. (Buls)

Up until now Jesus had protected (in v 12b the verb becomes *epfulaxa*, “guarded”) the disciples, and he did a successful job. The guarding was a day-to-day responsibility. Judas is not an exception, for he was never given to Jesus by the Father. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

As long as Jesus was present in the world, in the flesh, so long He personally tended to the keeping of His disciples in the faith. He taught, He admonished them day by day; He always revealed anew to them the name of the Father, in the Gospel which He proclaimed. And His Gospel-work had been most

successful. He had kept all of the disciples whom the Father had given Him, His watchful guiding and warning had not been in vain but only in one single case, that of the son of perdition, of the traitor. In his case the Scripture had to be fulfilled. Cf. Ps. 69, 4; Acts 1, 20. (Kretzmann)

epfulaxa “guard, keep safe, protect, defend, keep under guard,” imperfect tense: Jesus guarded the disciples and continued to guard them day after day until he successfully completed his earthly ministry and was about to return to heaven. “None has been lost” (in the spiritual sense of Jn 3:16) except for Judas, “one [doomed to](#) destruction” (see Ps 41:9 for the prophecy). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

the one doomed to destruction. † Lit. “the son of destruction” (see 2Th 2:3), i.e., one belonging to the sphere of damnation and destined for destruction. (CSB)

"None of them was lost" is to be taken literally. The keeping and preserving which Jesus did through the Word of God was truly effective. "Except" can mean either "except" or "but." Jesus is not saying that His keeping and preserving was ineffective in one case. "The son of perdition" is, of course, Judas. Judas was not lost because Jesus' Word could not or did not preserve him. (Buls)

Bengel: He destroyed himself, Acts 1:25.

Fahling: He was chosen in good faith, but he turned traitor, and thus Scripture was fulfilled. (Buls)

The purpose clause at the end of this verse cannot mean that Scripture foreordained that Judas would be lost but that no one caught God (in the person of Jesus) off guard. John 6:70,71; 13:26 make it clear that Jesus warned Judas again and again. What he did, he did deliberately, a warning to us all. (Buls)

SCRIPTURE WOULD BE FULFILLED – God remained in control. God brings about good from evil despite people’s bad intentions. (TLSB)

17:13 I SAY THESE THINGS - “I say these things” refers to Jesus’ audible prayer, which the disciples heard clearly. Why did Jesus pray in their hearing? Luther answers: “In order that through the Word, caught with the ears and held in the hearts, they be comforted, joyfully rely upon it, and be able to say: See, this is what my Lord Christ said . . . this have I heard from his mouth. What is needed here is that one hold to the Word with his whole heart and take comfort in that” (Lenski, *St. John’s Gospel*, 1142). *Peplērōmenēn* “fulfill, make come true, make full as a jar filled to the brim, bring to completion”; the key to immeasurable joy is living in intimate contact with Christ, the source of all joy. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

my joy. See note on 15:11. (CSB)

"Now I am coming to you," Jesus, the High Priest, Who is approaching His vicarious sacrifice and praying for His disciples. The disciples heard what He said, though He was speaking to the Father. "While I am still in the world," that is, "among My disciples," as becomes clear in the purpose clause: "so that they might be having My very own joy lastingly fulfilled in themselves." (Buls)

Note four things:

1. It is a constant "having;"
2. It is Jesus' very own joy;
3. It is not partial but total;
4. It is their very own.

How could Jesus speak of such great joy on such a sad occasion? Because He was certain that the Father would keep them by means of the Word and because of the joy that lay before Him, despite the cross, of sitting at the Father's right hand, Hebrews 12:2. Jesus rested in His Father's love. We rest in Jesus' love. The makes His joy complete in us, John 15:10.11. (Buls)

Luther: Now if someone wants to know whether he is elected or in what relation he stands to God, let him but look upon the mouth of Jesus, that is, upon these and similar verses. (Buls)

Now Jesus places them in the Father's keeping. The disciples are to have the full measure of Jesus' joy, even in the midst of a hateful world. Jesus speaks all this in audible words so that the disciples might hear and trust. Jesus will still be involved in the protection of the disciples. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

But now the sojourn of Christ on earth was drawing to a close; no more would He be present with His disciples in the terms of personal, visible contact to which they had become accustomed. Jesus was going to the Father, and therefore He was making this prayer in their presence, while He was yet in the world, that they might be convinced of His personal interest in them, of His unchanging solicitude for them. His urgent prayer for their preservation in the faith should give them the assurance, as it should to the believers of all times, that nothing is left undone which will assist them in the midst of all the perils of the world and their own flesh. That is a source of wonderful comfort to the believers, that gives them the fullness of joy. Theirs, then, is a joy in Christ; they are happy over the fact that they are Christians, that they are intimates of the Father. This joy must drive out every bit of doubt as to a person's remaining in faith to the end, just as this entire section of Christ's prayer contains nothing but comfort for every Christian. Where there is such intimacy as between God and Christ, on the one hand, and the believers, on the other, all fear and doubts must vanish. "Now if some one wants

to know whether he is elected or in what relation he stands to God, let him but look upon the mouth of Jesus, that is, upon these and similar verses. For though a person cannot say of a certainty who will be elected in the future and remain to the end, yet this is certainly true, that whosoever is called and comes thereto, namely, to hear this revelation, that is, the Word of Christ, provided he accept it in all sincerity, that is, fully hold and believe that it is true, they are the ones that are given to Christ by the Father . (Kretzmann)

17:14 GIVEN THEM YOUR WORD – The word "gift" in its various forms and always denoting a gift, occurs seventeen times in this chapter, unparalleled in the New Testament. And "world" in its various meanings occurs eighteen times, also unparalleled. Note emphatic "I have given" denotes a lasting gift, perfect tense. (Buls)

Lenski: This time he uses a word which points especially to the substance; but he retains the verb 'to give' for the Word is always a pure gift which emanates from grace in the Giver. (Buls)

We so easily grow tired of the Word of God or take it for granted. It is always a gift. This gift comes to us as a gift from the Father through Jesus Himself. (Buls)

"The world" here means the unbelieving among men. Their reason for hating disciples is now given. "They are not of the world" means "of the nature of the world." He means the sinful world. Jesus, in His own right, is not of the nature of the world. His disciples, by their union of faith in Jesus, likewise are not of the nature of the sinful world. The world hates Christians because they have the gift of God in Christ, His Word. This is a burden which Christians must bear. (Buls)

Kretzmann: There is no need of following the lead of enthusiasts that prate of new revelations, the inner light, and keys to Scriptures. The Word of the Gospel as we have it in Scriptures is all-sufficient for all needs. (Buls)

Jesus gave the disciples the Word, and now the world hates them because the Word changed them. They are no longer of the world. Remember that Jesus himself is the Word; the disciples are not of the world because they are in Christ, who is not of the world, and they came to be in Christ by means of the Word, living *and* spoken. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

the world. The world that is hostile to God and God's people (see notes on v. 5; 1:10). (CSB)

emisēsen "hate, despise, disregard, be indifferent to": there is a constant tension between the mind of Christ and the spirit of the world. The world hates Christians because Christian values are different from those of a sinful world. If we do not

cooperate by joining the world in sin, we are seen as accusers and judges, true adversaries to Satan. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

not of the world. They do not have the mind-set of the world, i.e., hostility to God, for they have been “born of the Spirit” (3:8) and are “children of God” (1:12). (CSB)

Cf 15:18–19. (TLSB)

17:15 God calls Christians to be witnesses to the world (15:27), which they cannot be if they are no longer in the world. *evil one.* Satan. Cf 1Jn 2:13–14; 3:12. (TLSB)

not that you take them out of the world. The world is where Jesus’ disciples are to do their work; Jesus does not wish them to be taken from it until that work is done (see v. 18). (CSB)

"You" is here used of an equal to an equal, unlike a formal "Thou" which is used of an inferior toward a superior. Therefore, the divinity of Jesus is implicit. (Buls)

Jesus does not will or pray for our separation from the world, though it be sinful, but our preservation from the evil one, the devil. How this is done is clear from verses 11 and 17. The devil is the most formidable enemy known to us. He is a liar and murderer and works through his agents among men, John 8:44. He constantly goes about like a hungry and raging lion, 1 Peter 5:8. At 2 Corinthians 11:13,14 Paul tells us that false prophets appear as Apostles of Christ but no wonder, for Satan himself appears as an angel of light. Satan constantly tempts us as he did Christ, Matthew 4:1-10. But Jesus has conquered Satan, Luke 10:10, and therefore has given us the authority to tread on Satan's great power, Luke 10:19. This does not mean that Jesus' disciples are sinless. But from God's point of view the believer does not sin because Jesus Himself keeps that person and so the devil cannot touch him, 1 John 5:18. If it weren't for the Atonement, Jesus' prayers to the Father, and the Word of God, we wouldn't stand a chance, no matter how pious we might appear. (Buls)

arēs “take up, take away, remove”: we have a natural desire, to take the less painful path, but that desire is not what God wants for his people. We have another purpose; namely, to minister to those with whom we come into contact. *Ponērou* “evil one, one of the devil, malignant”: when Jesus taught the disciples to pray, he included a similar petition, “but deliver us from evil.” (See also Ps 121:7–8; 2 Thess. 3:3.) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

the evil one. Especially active in the world (1Jn 5:19), making God’s protection indispensable. (CSB)

Satan. Cf 1Jn 2:13–14; 3:12. (TLSB)

The Christians, then, are perfectly willing and satisfied to occupy the position in which the world places them by its hatred, since thereby they are identified more fully with Christ. Purposely, therefore, Jesus does not ask that the believers be taken out of the world, that they be removed from the proximity of harm and danger and hatred, but only that the Father would keep them, shield them against the wiles of the devil. That is the one side of the Christians' preservation in faith, which is the work of God. God guards and protects them from their enemies, the world and the devil, by not permitting these enemies to seduce them, nor lead them into misbelief, despair, or other great shame and vice. That danger is always present, and many a believer has been overcome, since he did not trust in the power of God alone. (Kretzmann)

17:16 Compare this verse with 14^b. Because of the prayer of Jesus, the Father keeps them from Satan. This is what separates them from the sinful world and its nature. Jesus does not pray that the Father keep Jesus from Satan. He needn't ask that for He is true God and He Himself conquered Satan in our behalf. Because of this victory the Father keeps believers from Satan through the Word so that, like Jesus, they are not of the world. (Buls)

Ylvisaker: Jesus knows the world better than do the disciples. (Buls)

Verse 16 leads right into verse 17. Note that in both verses 15 and 17 the object is the disciples, not Jesus. He is not praying for what the Father should do for Him but for the disciples. (Buls)

If they are taken out of the world, they can no longer do their job. The evil one (*tou ponērou*) can be seen as referring to Satan. Jesus includes protection from the devil and all else. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

kosmou "world, humankind," especially populated with those hostile to God and his purpose. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

17:17 *Sanctify*. See NIV text note. (CSB)

Bengel: Claim them wholly to Thyself. (Buls)

Kretzmann: The Christians are sanctified, separated from the world, as soon as faith had been worked in their hearts. (Buls)

Lenski: 'Sanctify' means to set apart for God and to devote only to Him. (Buls)

"sanctify" (vv 17, 19) is more properly translated "to dedicate what is already holy" in these verses instead of the more traditional "sanctify" (R. V. G. Tasker, *The Gospel According to St. John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960] 193). Lenski suggests it be translated "to set apart for God . . . to separate from all profane connection, and to be devoted to God alone" (1146). It is the Word of God that

purifies our hearts and minds. Armed with it, we are called to be salt and light (Mt 5:13–16). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 2)

hagiasion. “Sanctify” means “to set apart for God.” Jesus began in them the process of sanctification, but they need help to continue in the process. The Word of God is wholly the truth. Only by the Word of truth will the disciples be sanctified. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

God sets His people apart from the world by means of His Word. (TLSB)

by the truth; your word.† Christians are sanctified (made holy) by the word of God, a means by which the Holy Spirit produces faith. Sanctification and revelation (as recorded in God’s word) go together. For the connection of Christ’s teaching with truth cf. 8:31–32. (CSB)

Only God can accomplish this. Man, no matter how pious or respected he may be, cannot do it by his own works, worthiness, prayers or endeavors. How does God accomplish this? "By the truth," a prepositional phrase denoting manner or means. (Buls)

Thayer: Truth: The truth, as taught in the Christian religion, respecting God and the execution of his purposes through Christ, opposed alike to the superstitions of the Gentiles and the inventions of the Jews, and to the corrupt opinions and precepts of false teachers even among Christians. (Buls)

Well said. And then Jesus adds: "Your Word is Truth." The substance of God's Word, both Law and Gospel, is Truth. The Christian, like Christ, is not of the world which is constantly floundering and sinking in a sea of uncertainty. Only the Father, at the prayers of Jesus, can *AND DOES* sanctify, set aside, assure, make certain and confident. And He does this by means of the *THE TRUTH, THE WORD OF GOD*. (Buls)

And therefore the prayer of Jesus takes this factor into account. He asks that God complete the separation between the believers and the world, sanctify the disciples wholly by consecrating them to God alone, through the power of the Word. The Christians are sanctified, separated from the world, as soon as faith has been wrought in their hearts. But it is the power of God in the Word which must continue to keep them separated and consecrated. And this sanctification and these fruits of faith are not our work and ability, but God's mercy and divine power. The believers being thus set apart through the power of the Word, they are ready for their great ministry. (Kretzmann)

17:18 *As you sent me ... I have sent them.* Jesus’ mission is one of the dominant themes of this Gospel and is given as the pattern for his followers. (CSB)

Jesus sends his disciples on a mission. The disciples are to complete the work that Jesus started. The mission was proclaiming the Gospel to the entire world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 2)

This anticipates the sending in 20:21 (cf. 13:20; 15:26-27). (TLSB)

Another "just as," the fourth and last in our text. Go back and look at the other three in verses 11, 14, 16. The communion of saints is a unity like that of Father and Son. The unbelieving world hates believers because Jesus has given them the Father's Word, but worry not for this is a proof of the fact that they are not of the world, just as Jesus is not of this world. You are not alone. Believers are not of the world because the Father Himself sets them aside, and this He does through the Word. (Buls)

Back to verse 18: We cherish Christmas because on that occasion we remember that the Father sent His Son among men, into the world. The difference between what the commission of Christ accomplished, and what the commission of the disciples accomplishes is brought out in verse 19, but we mention here that, in a sense, every day of the life of a Christian is like Christmas because Jesus is sending the Christian among men, into the world. This commission covers the entire life of the Christian: his public and private life, his relationship to members of his family, the use of time, confessing Jesus in word and deed before men, etc. (Buls)

into the world. We may long for heaven, but it is on earth that our work is done. (CSB)

Even as God sent the Son into the world to preach and bring salvation, so the Son, in turn, sends the believers out into the world to preach the redemption that has been earned by Jesus. They should be witnesses for the truth, they should confess Christ. They are His witnesses to the world, for all men are included both under sin and under grace, John 3, 16. (Kretzmann)

17:19 *I sanctify myself.* This statement appears to be unparalleled. In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) the verb is used of consecrating priests (Ex 28:41) and sacrifices (Ex 28:38; Nu 18:9). Jesus solemnly "sets himself apart to do God's will," which at this point meant his death. (CSB)

Gk *hagiazō*, same word translated "sanctify" in v 17. Jesus set Himself apart to do the saving work for which the Father sent Him. (TLSB)

In the midst of the unbelieving world Christ wanted to build His Church. And in order that this might be accomplished, in order that the work of the disciples might be done with the feeling of free and full consecration, Jesus consecrates Himself, gives Himself as a sacrifice for the whole world. He is about to enter upon His Passion now to work a perfect redemption. (Kretzmann)

The Father sent the Son as the great High Priest. Verse 19 grows out of verse 18. Disciples cannot be sent until they know what is said in verse 19. "In their stead," is vicarious. In their stead Jesus sanctified Himself, set Himself aside for the purpose of suffering, dying, rising again, ascending to the Father in the stead of and for the sake of the disciples. "May be" is the perfect passive participle and is durative, denoting consummation, not just in the life to come, but now already. And "sanctify" repeats what He said in verse 17, "by means of Truth," the Word of God. Forms of "sanctify" occur three times, once in 17 with the Father as Sanctifier through the Word, secondly in 19 with the Son Who sanctifies Himself (the vicarious atonement), and finally in the passive voice of the disciples who have been sanctified through the Truth. (Buls)

In verses 6-19 Jesus prays only for His own, His disciples, you and me too. In verse 6 He says: "I do not make request for the world." This passage does not deny the universal atonement. As someone has said: "Jesus is not praying against the world." But in this passage He prays only for His disciples to assure them of the things that are the most necessary: (Buls)

1. The actual unity of all believers in the Father and the Son;
2. The gift of the Word from the Father and the Son which assures us that we will not be lost and which separates us from the unbelieving world and Satan;
3. That the joy of Christ is our very own;
4. That we should not become be disconcerted over the hatred of the world;
5. That the Son sanctified us through the Word, the Truth;
6. That the life of the Christian has a true purpose, as certain as that of the sending of the Son into the world.

The whole passage is purest Gospel. (Buls)

that they too may be ... sanctified. Jesus died on the cross not only to save us but also to consecrate us to God's service (see NIV text note on v. 17). (CSB)

Every believer that accepts this deliverance, this redemption, thereby is separated from the hostile, unbelieving world and consecrated in and for the truth of the Gospel. Thus the disciples are sanctified and remain sanctified; they remain in the Word of Truth, in and through which the sin which persists in troubling them is forgiven, and they receive strength both to combat the evil and to carry out the will of the Lord for the proclamation of the Word to others. (Kretzmann)

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰ "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as

you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴ “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. ²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

17:20-26 The High Priestly Prayer of Jesus began at 17:1. The first petition of this prayer encompasses 17:1–5. Within this petition, Jesus prays for himself—that his Father would guide him through all that stood before him at that hour (the cross) and that through it all, the glory of the Father would be seen in Jesus as he redeemed the world. The second petition (17:6–19) includes Jesus’ prayer for his disciples, particularly the Eleven. He asks the Father to keep them as “one” (17:11), united in the faith delivered to them (and entrusted to them) to carry forward into the world. Notice 17:19, where Jesus consecrates himself—that he would be up to the task to redeem those entrusted to his care while on earth. Our text picks up with the third petition of this beautiful prayer of Jesus. Here he expands his prayer to include the entire world—and all who would ever live on the earth. He asks that the profound mysteries of the Gospel would be proclaimed to all people of all time, so that they, too, through faith, would become one with the Father and himself and receive the gift of eternal life that he would accomplish in the hours that now loomed ominously before him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

17:20 *those who will believe in me.* Jesus had just spoken of the mission and the sanctification of his followers (vv. 18–19). He was confident that they would spread the gospel, and he prayed for those who would believe as a result. All future believers are included in this prayer. (CSB)

All subsequent generations of believers. (TLSB)

The Lord Jesus makes an assertion about the quality and effect of the believers’ witness, for He prays for “those who will believe in me through their message.” The Lord Jesus makes an assertion about the quality and effect of the believers’ witness, for he prays for “those who will believe in me through their message.” Believers will witness, and that witness will be effective! A bracing and encouraging word for all of us. The church will always proclaim the Gospel, and people will believe! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

Jesus’ prayer now takes a turn that embraces all people of all time. He prays for “those who will believe in me through their [the apostles’] word” (preaching). This

fits hand in glove with the efforts of the Eleven to replace Judas in the First Reading, for the importance of their mandate to proclaim faithfully Jesus and him crucified did not escape them. Nor does that importance escape Christ's followers to this day. The Church then—and now—sees the utter importance of raising up faithful men to proclaim Christ to those in every generation. Also, consider how comforting it is to us twenty-first-century Christians that Jesus even had an eye on us as he entered his Passion. Truly, his Passion, death, and resurrection were for all generations (2 Cor 5:14–15)! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

Jesus makes a clear distinction between “these,” the eleven, and “those believing in Me through their word.” While it is distinct, the prayer embraces both as belonging together. For these coming believers all become believers “through their word,” that of the eleven. (Lenski)

In the singular “word” all the teaching and the writing of the apostles is summarized as a unit; yet logos has the idea of communication. The Word communicated by the apostles is the means for producing faith and making believers. (Lenski)

Word and faith are correlative; the one intends to produce the other, and the other has no basis but the one. Apart from the Word there is no church, because there is no faith apart from the Word; and the church is constituted out of those and those alone who have faith. At once it appears how dangerous it is to be ignorant of the Word or to alter and falsify it in any way. (Lenski)

17:21-23 Unity! The purpose of unity among believers is that the world might believe that Jesus is sent from the Father! “You [Father] are in me and I am in you.” This unity is mystery and miracle and is from above! This unity will heal the division and disunity that reared its demonic head in Eden: “We were afraid when we heard you. . . . The woman you gave me. . . . The serpent you put in the garden” (Genesis 3; paraphrase). When the unity Jesus desires is evident among believers and is observed by others, those who see it will know the unity is a miracle of God, for it is “otherworldly.” It points to the truth that the Son of God, the Seed of the woman, had indeed come and crushed the head of the serpent, the origin of disunity between God's people of all ages! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

“I have given them the glory that you gave me.” Evangelist John speaks of the glory of God in 1:14. “We have seen his (i.e., the Word who was with God and was and is God) glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” God's glory is especially seen, then, in the salvific life, death, and resurrection of Jesus! In the context of Jn 13:31 and following, Jesus speaks of his glory as that which is connected to his death on the cross and his resurrection! The implications of Romans 6 are also breathtaking! Baptism unites

us with Christ! To be thus connected with him is also our glory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

Jesus prays that his followers “may all be one,” following the perfect pattern that he and the Father have had from eternity. In that oneness, his children on earth would then demonstrate a strong, united witness to the world dying in sin, for Jesus has established his Church (and the people within it) to be his continuing call to the world. Furthermore, Jesus states in the most concrete of terms that the motivation for Jesus’ presence on earth (and particularly at this moment before he departs the Upper Room for Gethsemane) was the love of God for mankind. Amazingly, this incalculable love is of the same order as the love the Father has for his one and only Son (v 23). This love of the Father and his Son will then be witnessed by the world as Jesus previously told them this night: “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (13:35). Jesus’ desire is that his Church be “perfectly one” (v 23); that is, his prayer is that the Church is to be united fully and one in every sense of the word—doctrine and practice. Wherever the Church is not united in a common confession and practice, it is a result of the sin that continues on this side of eternity. However, where unity is found, a strong witness always results—to the glory of God and the salvation of men through a faithful witness and practice of the Gospel by Christ’s Church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

17:21 *that all of them may be one.* See note on v. 11. (CSB)

Unity and love give powerful witness to the world. (TLSB)

The purpose of unity among believers is that the world might believe that Jesus is sent from the Father. This unity is a mystery and a miracle, and is from above. Baptism unites us with Christ! To be thus connected with Him is also our glory. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 2)

The unity of all believers comes through faith in the Gospel. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

Father. See note on v. 1. (CSB)

God always hears Jesus’ prayers. Cf. John 11:42. Even His prayer in Gethsemane was answered. We can rest assured that this prayer for unity between believers and the Trinity has been answered. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

JUST AS YOU AND I ARE ONE – Our mystical oneness as believers is a resemblance to the essential oneness of the divine Persons (and we are free to add the Spirit). This is absolutely the highest type of oneness known. This and nothing less is to be the model and pattern for the oneness of believers. The very idea of duplicating in us the interpenetrating oneness of the divine Persons is so impossible that we decline to consider it. It defines how all the believers are

to be one, how their oneness is to resemble that of the divine Person, namely thus: “that also they be in us.” All believers being in the Father and the Son, they will certainly be one. This will not be a mere human oneness (national, racial, political, in a society, or the like). It will bear the divine stamp: a oneness in the true God, in actual spiritual union with Him. This is why so high a model and pattern is set for our oneness. Union with God and with Christ makes us a unit in ourselves. (Lenski)

On the view that Jesus prays for the oneness which already exist among all believers by faith, instead of for the oneness that is to be the result of this faith in perfect adherence to the Word. Even the smallest measure of faith joins us to God and the mystical body of the church. But this is only the beginning. Our apprehension of the Word is to grow, the range and the inner power of our faith in that Word likewise. The more we have of the Word in our hearts by faith and thus also ruling us in our lives, the more perfect is our oneness. (Lenski)

that the world may believe. The unity of believers should have an effect on outsiders, to convince them of the mission of Christ. Jesus’ prayer is a rebuke of the groundless and often bitter divisions among believers. (CSB)

Luther says, “This is the fruit which is to follow from this oneness, namely that Christ’s Word is to break forth more and more and be accepted in the world as God’s Word, in which an almighty, divine, unconquerable power and the treasure of all grace and blessedness reside.” What stirs the world is not our faith but our faith arrayed as a unit behind the Word. This oneness of faith voicing the Word, adhering to it in every part, obeying its every precept, is bound to act powerfully upon the world. The greater our oneness in the Word, the greater our victories in this world. The more schism, heresy, and ignorance prevail, the less will our victories be. The power that creates faith lies wholly in the Word. Yet it makes a great difference how the church acts in bringing the Word to men. (Lenski)

17:22 *the glory.* See note on v. 1. Believers are to be characterized by humility and service, just as Christ was, and it is on them that God’s glory rests. (CSB)

Christ’s glory was seen chiefly on the cross. (TLSB)

This our glory, received from Jesus, is invisible while we are in what we may call our state of humiliation; the consummation at the time of the Parousia will reveal it in all its excellence, Rev. 3:21. (Lenski)

As God He already had this glory. God gave the human nature of Christ glory not because He needed it but so that He could give it to believers, the right to be children of God. We don’t have this doxa on our own. It is a gift of the Father to the Son who has given it to us. By the way, forms of didoxomi occur with unparalleled frequency in this chapter, seventeen times. They denote either

what the Father gives to Christ's human nature (twice 2, 4, twice 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 22, twice 24) or what Christ gives to man (2, 8, 14, 22). The *ina* (that) clause, depending on *dedoka*, denotes purpose. Translate *osin* "continue to be" not "become." (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

that they may be one as we are one.† Again the Lord emphasized the importance of unity among his followers, and again the standard is the unity of the Father and the Son. See 10:30 and note. (CSB)

Jesus' disciples were commissioned to bear witness to His glory as the Savior of the world. (TLSB)

The purpose that Jesus has in making this gift is now added: "in order that they may be one even we are one." The gift of the divine glory unites us in one body. In this restatement of the oneness of believers we must not forget the Word. This Word mediates the indwelling of Jesus in us and thus the reception of His glory in us, and thus the oneness that results. When Jesus says, "even as we are one," His human nature must not be left out. This is the nature that received the divine glory, received it for our sakes in order that we might be partakers of it through His indwelling. Through His human nature in which all the Godhead dwells bodily Jesus is our Savior; and all His saving gifts come to us through this nature, here in particular the gift of His glory. (Lenski)

17:23 *I in them and you in me.* There are two in-dwellings: that of the Son in believers, and that of the Father in the Son. It is because the latter is a reality that the former can take place. (CSB)

complete unity. Again the emphasis on unity has an evangelistic aim. This time it is connected not only with the mission of Jesus but also with God's love for people and for Christ. (CSB)

Attain perfect unity. (TLSB)

"May they be brought to . . . unity to let the world know that you have sent me." Jesus lets us know that our unity convinces the world of the truth of his message and mission! Then what does this say about the disunity we practice? Does this disunity not drive the world to unbelief? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

The context is speaking about people who are already believers. People discover the mutual unity which already exists in Christ. This quiet unity of Christians, by faith in Christ, and analogical to the unity between Father and Son has another purpose, a mission purpose: that the unbelieving would may believe that the Father sent the Son. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

WORLD KNOW THAT YOU SENT ME...HAVE LOVED THEM – This double love of the Father shines forth in the great act of the father in sending Jesus on His great mission. The church proclaims this great act by means of the Word. The whole gospel tells how the Father gave His Son for the salvation of the world (3:16). Here is the agape of God for the world, His comprehending and purposeful love, seeing the plight of sinners and purposing to save them (3:16). Many of those in the world will be drawn (6:44) by this love. Its sweetness and its gifts will win them. They will desire to share in all this blessedness. (Lenski)

The frequency of the word kosmos in this chapter is unparalleled in Scripture, eighteen times, with three meanings: a) the universe; b) the world of unbelievers; c) all men. “May realize” is synonymous with “may believe.” (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

AS YOU HAVE LOVED ME – In this love to Jesus the love to us believers is embraced. We may even say how this comes to pass, for this Jesus who so perfectly did the saving will of the Father is now in us, and we in Him. By this identification we share with Jesus in the Father’s love. Blessed are all those who join us in the reception of this love. (Lenski)

God has the same love for believers as He has for the incarnate Christ. This is a staggering thought. Behind it lies the vicarious atonement. Christ didn’t need this love for Himself. He took our place. On this verse Ylvisaker: “He (Christ) makes it apparent that He does not allude merely to the inner unity of faith, hope, and love; for this unity is not visible to the world; but also to the outward bond of union as an expression of fellowship in the same mind and in the same judgment (1 Cor. 1:10).” (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

17:24 We may say that now the epilog or conclusion of the prayer begins. This contains no more petitions. The epilog rests on all that precedes and crowns the whole. (Lenski)

Father. See note on v. 1. (CSB)

I want. Means “I will that.” Jesus said, “I will”—his last will and testament for his followers. Where he himself was concerned, he prayed, “not what I will, but what you will” (Mk 14:36). (CSB)

“Father, I desire.” Consider deeply Jesus’ words here. He desires that his disciples “may be with me where I am,” and that eternal desire is the basis for his will. He will allow nothing to interfere with the accomplishment of his gracious goal—his beloved will be with him in glory. Consider also that this is God Incarnate saying these words, and if God says this, it will happen. These words of Jesus then provide utter certainty of salvation for the believer. The Christian can live day to day, knowing that at the end of his earthly journey, his destination will be nowhere else but the heavenly Jerusalem. From “the foundation of the

world” (v 24), the Father has loved Jesus, and together they have shared divine glory. Now Jesus prays to the Father that those for whom he is about to die will also share in that glory (v 22). This is astounding. Where among the plethora of false gods of this world—from ancient times to the present—is there a record of a god that shares his glory with those beneath his divinity? Truly, our triune God is unique from all other gods. His generous, self-giving love and grace know no bounds! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

YOU HAVE GIVEN – This denotes the sum total of believers, the elect. The Father has lastingly given them to the incarnate Christ. Nothing is more certain than the eternal life of the believer with Jesus. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

to be with me. The Christian’s greatest blessing. (CSB)

What Jesus wills is plain from what is not about to occur. Death will soon remove His visible presence from the disciples, but this is to be only a temporary separation. All believers are to be “with me” in heaven, in the glory into which Jesus is returning. The will of Jesus lifts the whole church from earth to heaven, from the lowliness here below to the exaltation above. (Lenski)

SEE – “I want those . . . to see my glory, the glory you have given me . . . before the creation of the world.” The verb *see* has the sense of “observe.” The implication is that we indeed will one day be ongoing and eternal observers of the glory of God. One is reminded of John’s word in Revelation: “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp” (Rev 21:22–23). “Before the creation of the world” points us to the profundity of God’s plan to save humanity even before the need for salvation becomes evident in history! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 11, Part 2)

Revelation 21:22-23, “I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light and the Lamb is its lamp.”

my glory. Perhaps used here to refer to Jesus’ eternal splendor (see 1Jn 3:2). Or Jesus’ prayer may have been that in the life to come they might fully appreciate the glory of his lowly service (cf. Eph 2:7). (CSB)

All these wonders of grace in the Son of man, wrought in time and culminating in our own glorification and in our beholding Jesus’ glory in heaven, go back to all eternity and center there in the love of the Father. The prayer of Jesus reaches back into all eternity, to the eternal love God, and at the same time reaches forward to all eternity and to the blessedness which shall be ours. (Lenski)

BEFORE CREATION OF THE WORLD – Here kosmos means “the universe.” This speaks of God’s eternal love, in Christ the incarnate One, for the elect which reaches into all eternity. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

17:25-26 In the last two verses of our text, Jesus concludes his prayer. He proceeds from the concept of the Church Militant to the Church Triumphant; that is, from faith to glory (cf. Rom 8:17). He prays with confident hope that the Church Militant would become the Church Triumphant and that the theology of the cross would be transformed into the theology of glory. Also herein, Jesus addresses his “righteous Father,” knowing that at the end of time, his good, gracious, and righteous will shall be done. Those who finish their lives in repentance and faith in Jesus shall “see [his] glory” (v 24), and those who rejected him shall be justly judged by the “righteous Father,” whose Son they have rejected. In other words, those who knew the Father through the revelation of Jesus will in the end personally share in the glory and perfect love that is theirs from eternity and into eternity! (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 20, Part 2)

17:25 *Righteous Father.* A form of address found only here in the NT (cf. “Holy Father,” v. 11). (CSB)

Jesus addresses the Father as righteous because He is fully confident that the Father will apply Jesus’ merits to the believers. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

they know. They did not know God directly and personally, but they knew God had sent Christ. To recognize God in Christ’s mission is a great advance over anything the world can know. (CSB)

The verb “know” is used in an intensive sense with reference to the knowledge of full realization. (Lenski)

His full knowledge of the Father results in the believers’ effective knowledge that the Father sent the Son to save them. (Exegetical Notes – Buls)

17:26 WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE YOU KNOWN – After His death and resurrection, through the Holy Spirit and the testimony of His disciples (cf 15:26–27). (TLSB)

Ch 17 Knowing that He is going to the cross, Jesus prays for His disciples and asks that they be united by faith in Him. Whenever Christians ignore God’s Word, they foster divisions within the Church and diminish their witness. But God’s Word is the truth that will unite His Church, glorify Him, and enable His people to fulfill their calling in a troubled world. • Heavenly Father, reveal in my life the love that You have shown me in Your Son. Amen. (TLSB)