

=FAVORITE BIBLE CHAPTERS=

Lesson 21

John 17

INTRODUCTION: In John 17 Jesus is about to go on trial and then to the cross. He has just finished eating the “last supper” with His disciples. He is praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. The lesson for this week will be over the contents of this prayer.

- I. THE OBJECTS OF HIS PRAYER--THE BELIEVERS. Notice in John 17:9 the words, “I pray for them.” Verse 8 explains that these are the ones who have believed on Him. They are spoken of in verse 9 as a “gift” of the Father. In verse 20 He goes a step further and reminds us that He is not only praying for those who are Christians at that time but for all the Christians of all the ages. In other words, He was praying for us! Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane was praying for you and me!

- II. THE PETITIONS IN HIS PRAYER.
 1. He prays that God will keep us from the world. Read John 17:11b. Notice the words, “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.” He was asking the Father to keep us from the world. The word, “world,” here refers to “the world arrangement.” It does not only mean drinking, though it does mean that. It means “the world arrangement.” He was asking the Father to keep us from being worldly-minded, materially-minded, secularly-minded, etc.
 2. He prays that we as Christians may be one. Notice John 17:11c. Notice the words, “that they may be one, as we are.” God’s people are to be one, even as Jesus was with the Father. Ah, what a challenge this is! What an example they set for us! In verse 21 we find about the same thing. Notice the words, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee...that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” In other words, our oneness with each other, our unity as members of the body of Christ, enables the world to see and believe. In verse 22 notice the words, “that they may be one, even as we are one.” (Teacher, discuss with the class the importance of loving each other, praying for each other, not criticizing each other, etc.) What a pity it is when we slander each other and criticize one another! Picture Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Great drops of blood are flowing from His brow. Picture His agony and concern as He prays that we would be one.
 3. He prays for our joy. See John 17:13, notice the words, “...that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” He wants us to be happy, so He prays that we will have joy. This Christianity that we embrace is no sour disposition situation. It is the only true joy there is!
 4. He prays that we should be kept from the Devil. In John 17:15, notice the words, “...that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.” This means, “That thou shouldest keep them from the evil one, Satan.” He prays that we may be kept from sin, that Satan will not have dominion over us, that we will walk with God. (Teacher, discuss with the class the evil things of the world and show how that Jesus prayed that we would not participate in them.)
 5. He prays for our separation. John 17:17, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” The word “sanctify” means “set apart.” Not only does He want us “kept from the evil one,” but He wants us “set apart to His work.” He has a will for our lives. He wants us to set apart our lives to that will. He prayed to this effect.
 6. He prays for our maturity. John 17:23, “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect...” The word “perfect” means “mature.” It is like a body which has all its faculties—two arms, two legs, ten fingers, ten toes, two eyes, two ears, etc. Jesus wants us to have every bit of maturity that we can have in Him. He wants us to be complete in Him. He wants us to be well-rounded Christians, having every faculty and being “grown up” in the Lord.

7. He prays that we may be with Him in Heaven. John 17:24, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me....” Ah, what a beautiful statement! He wants to see us; He wants us to see Him. He wants us to see Him in His glory. He prays that we will be with Him in Heaven. As all of His prayers are, this prayer will be answered! We will be with Him, blessed be God!

III. THE GIFTS MENTIONED IN HIS PRAYER. You will find that Jesus’ gifts to those whom the Father gave Him are mentioned. In John 17:2 eternal life is mentioned as a gift. In verses 6 and 26 the Father’s name is mentioned as a gift to us. In verses 8 and 14 the Father’s words are mentioned as a gift to us. In verse 13 His own joy is given to us, and in verse 22 His own glory is given to us.

CONCLUSION: It is obvious that Jesus loves His own. He prays for us seven times in this chapter. He speaks of believers as given to him by the Father. This is found in verse 2, twice in verse 6, and once in each of these verses: 9, 11, 12, 24. Jesus is God’s love gift to the world (John 3:16), and believers are the Father’s love gift to Jesus. Ah, how He loves us! Thank God for such love!