

# Exposition of the Gospel of John CHAPTER 59

## CHRIST INTERCEDING (CONTINUED)

by A.W. Pink

---

### Transcript

Exposition of the Gospel of John

CHAPTER 59

CHRIST INTERCEDING (CONTINUED)

John 17:13-19

The following is an Analysis of the passage which is to be before us: — 1. Christ's desire for His disciples' joy, verse 13. 2. The disciples hated by the world, verse 14. 3. Christ's prayer for their preservation, verse 15. 4. The disciples identified with Christ in separation from the world, verse 16. 5. Christ's prayer for their sanctification, verse 17. 6. The disciples sent into the world as Christ was, verse 18. 7. Christ's provision for their sanctification, verse 19. One chief reason why the Lord Jesus uttered audibly the wonderful prayer recorded in John 17 in the hearing of His apostles was that they might be instructed and comforted thereby, and not the apostles only, but all His people since then. This is clear from verse 13: "And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world that (in order that) they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." "He addresses His Father as taking His own place in departing, and giving His disciples theirs (that is, His own), with regard to the Father and to the world, after He had gone away to be glorified with the Father. The whole chapter is essentially putting the disciples in His own place, after laying the ground for it in His own glorifying and work. It is, save the last verses, His place on earth. As He was divinely in heaven, and showed a divine, heavenly character on earth, so (He being glorified as man in heaven) they, united with Him, were in turn to display the same. Hence we have first the place He personally takes, and the Work which entitled them to it" (Mr. J. N. Darby). The above quotation (rather clumsily worded) will repay careful thought. It is to be noted that the final ground on which the Savior asked to be glorified was not His own personal perfections, not His essential oneness with the Father, but, instead, that Work which He completed here below. In this He presented a valid and sure title for us to join Him in the same heavenly blessedness, and also laid the foundation for us taking His place here below. Mark how this is emphasized all through: First, "I have given them the words which thou gavest me" (John 17:8). Second, "that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13). Third, "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16). Fourth, "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world" (John 17:18). Fifth, "I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified" (John 17:19). Sixth, "the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them" (John 17:22). Seventh, "that the

love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them" (John 17:26). What a place! What a privilege! What an honor! Amazing the grace and the love which bestowed it. Wondrous is the position we occupy, the place which is ours—the same place of blessing which Christ enjoyed when He was here. It is true that we are blest through Christ, but that is not all the truth, nor by any means the most striking part of it: we are also blest with Him. The love wherewith the Father had loved the Son, should be in the disciples. They should enter into the consciousness of it, and thus would His joy be fulfilled in them. It is this that we are called to, the enjoyment in this world of the love which Christ knew here below: His Father's love. What was His delight? Was it from the world? Surely not. He was in the world, but never of it; His joy was from and in the Father. And He has communicated to us the means which ministers to this joy: "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me" (John 17:8). The above aspect of truth is further developed in John 17 in the sevenfold way in which the Lord Jesus has identified us with Himself. First there is identity in fellowship: "As thou hast given him power over all flesh that he should give eternal life (Himself, see 1 John 1:1) to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2). Second, identity of spirit and aim: "that they may be one as we" (John 17:11). Third, identity in separation: "they are not of the world even as I am not of the world" (John 17:14). Fourth, identity of mission, "as thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world" (John 17:18). Fifth, identity in fellowship: "As thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21). Sixth, identity of imparted glory: "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them" (John 17:22). Seventh, identity in love: "that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me" (John 17:23). Another thing which it is blessed to behold is that, in this Prayer the Lord Jesus renders an account of His work to the Father, and this in seven particulars: First, He had glorified the Father on earth (John 17:4). Second, He had finished the work which had been given Him to do (John 17:4). Third, He had manifested the Father's name unto His own (John 17:6). Fourth, He had given them the Father's words (John 17:8, 14). Fifth, He had kept them as a shepherd keeps his sheep (John 17:12). Sixth, He had sent them forth into the world (John 17:18). Seventh, He had given them the glory which the Father had bestowed upon Him (John 17:22)—mark the "I have" in each verse. How striking it is to note that in His work among the saints everything was in connection with the Father: it was the Father He had glorified; it was the Father's name He had manifested, etc. The portion which is now to engage our attention is the second division of the second section of this Prayer. In the first section, John 17:1-5, the Savior prays for Himself. In the second section, John 17:6-19, He prays for His disciples. From John 17:6 to verse 12, He is principally engaged in presenting to the Father the persons of those for whom He was about to intercede, interspersing two petitions for their preservation and unification. In John 17:13-19, He continues His supplications on their behalf, verse 13 being the transitional point between the two sub-divisions. "And now I come to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13). Though it be by no means easy to trace the connection between this verse and those which precede and follow, yet the meaning of its contents is clear and blessed. The Savior would not only have His people safe in eternity, but He desires them to be happy here and now: He would have them enter into His joy. It was for this reason He had uttered this Prayer while He was here upon earth. How this reveals the affections of our great High Priest! He might have offered this Prayer in silence to the Father, so that we had known nothing of its gracious and comforting details. But that would not have satisfied the heart of the Lord Jesus. He spoke audibly so that the apostles might hear Him, and He has caused it to be written down too, so that we also might know of His deep interest in us. How it behoves us, then, to prayerfully read and re-read and meditate frequently upon what is here recorded for our peace, our edification, our happiness! "And now come I to Thee." The commentators are divided as to whether these words signify, And now I address Thee in prayer, or, And now I am leaving the earth and returning to Thee. Probably both senses

are to be combined. The whole of this Prayer was in view of His almost immediate departure from the world and His ascension on high. But it is more than this. As pointed out in the introductory remarks of our first chapter on John 17, what we have here is also a pattern, a sample we might almost say, of the intercession which the Mediator is now making at God's right hand. This Prayer was first uttered on earth, therefore the "now come I to thee" would signify, 1 supplicate before Thy throne of grace. This Prayer is now being repeated in Heaven (whether audibly or not we cannot say), and for that, Christ had to return to the Father, hence "now come I to thee" would have this additional force. In the verse before us there is both declaration and supplication. The Savior is pressing His suit on behalf of those whom the Father had given Him. In view of His own departure, and their condition in the world, He justifies His earnestness in prayer for them. I am leaving them, therefore I must make provision for them. I approach Thee on their behalf; I am speaking aloud for their benefit; I have let them know that I am to be restored to that glory which I had with Thee before the world was; I have given them the assurance that they are the objects of Thy distinguished favor, and that they are Thy love gift to Me; I have let them see how deeply concerned I am about their preservation and unification—and all of this that "they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." "These things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." In the immediate application to the apostles, we understand our Lord's reference to be: In view of their deep dejection, I have sought to turn their sorrow into joy, by permitting them to hear Me commending them and their cause, with such cheerful confidence, to My Father and their Father. But this by no means exhausts the scope of His words here. There was a more specific reference in His mind, something which was designed for the instruction and consolation of all His people. "That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." What joy? The joy that He had at that very time, the joy which had been the portion of His heart all through those thirty-three years while He tabernacled among men. It was the joy of fellowship with the Father. It was this which He had before Him when, speaking by the Spirit of prophecy long before, He said: "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage. I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel; my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth" (Ps. 16:5-9). Though a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, yet "the joy of the Lord" was His "strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). It was to this He referred when He said to the disciples "I have meat to eat (a satisfying portion) that ye know not of" (John 4:32). "That they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." This was what the heart of the Savior craved for His people, and for this He had made full provision. In this Prayer, Christ makes it known that we have been brought into the same position before the Father that He had held, and just in proportion as we consciously enter into it, His joy is fulfilled in us. As the result of His finished work every barrier has been removed, the veil has been rent, a "new and living way" has been opened for us, and therefore have we access into "the holiest of all," and are invited to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:19-22). His Father is our Father; His relation to God—that of Son—is now ours; for "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6). Therefore does the Holy Spirit tell us, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, THAT your joy may be full" (1 John 1:3-4). It is blessed to mark how solicitous the Savior was over the happiness of His people. When He departed He sent the Holy Spirit to be their Comforter. In His Paschal Discourse He said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and your joy might be full" (John 15:11). In His instructions He bade them: "Ask and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24). A miserable Christian is therefore a self-contradiction. A joyless Christian is one who is out of communion with the Father: other objects have engaged his heart, and in consequence he walks not in the light of His

countenance. What is the remedy? To confess our sins to God; to put away everything which hinders our communion with Him; to make regular use of the means which He has graciously provided for the maintenance of our joy—the Word, prayer, meditation, the daily occupation of the heart with Christ, dwelling constantly on the glorious future that awaits us, proclaiming to others the unsearchable riches of Christ. "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them" (John 17:14). The connection of this with the previous verse is easy to perceive. In John 17:8, the Lord had said, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me": this means more than that He had expounded to them the Old Testament Scriptures. The reference, we believe, is to what we read of in Isaiah 50:4. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning. He wakeneth mine ear to hear, as the learned." Each morning had the perfect Servant waited upon the Father for His message or messages for each day, and those messages had been faithfully delivered. But here He says: "I have given them thy word." It was the testimony of what the Father was—that was the source of His joy, and now would be of theirs. "And the world hath hated them": "In proportion as they had their joy in God, would it be realized how far the world was away from Him, and it would hate them as not of it. The light would bring its shadows, and they would be identified with Him in sorrow and joy alike" (Numerical Bible). "And the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world" (John 17:14). The inhabitants of this world are fully under the dominion of its "prince," and led by him are wholly taken up with the things of time and sense, namely, all that is "not of the Father" (1 John 2:16). Therefore do the men of the world bear an implacable hatred to Christ and His people, because "they are not of the world." Once Christians were "of the world," they followed its "course," and were fully "conformed" to its policy, its principles, its aims, But grace has delivered them from this "present evil world" (Gal. 1:4), so that they now have new affections, new interests, a new Master. They have been separated from the world, and in proportion as they follow Christ their lives condemn the world (Heb. 11:7). Therefore does the world hate them: it secretly plots against them, it inwardly curses them, it says all manner of evil against them, it opposes them, it rejoices when any evil befalls them. "Even as I am not of the world." "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47). Christ never was of the world. He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). So He declared to the Jews: "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world" (John 8:23). But how is it also true of His people that they are "not of the world?" Because, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17). In consequence of this, he is a "partaker of the heavenly calling" (Heb. 3:1), his "citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20), he has been begotten unto an heavenly inheritance (1 Pet. 1:3-5). In view of this, he is but a "stranger and pilgrim" here, journeying to his Home on High. "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." This is another argument or plea—their danger—by which the Savior urges His petition for their preservation. They were being left by Him in the midst of an hostile world, therefore were they in sore need of protection. They no longer had anything in common. They could have no fellowship with the world: they could not take part in its worship: they could not further its plans. Therefore would they be despised, boycotted, persecuted. "They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that is good" (Ps. 38:20). "For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy" (Mark 6:20). "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you" (1 John 3:13). The Savior knowing that the world would not change, therefore besought the Father on behalf of those whom He left here. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil" (John 17:15). "This also He speaks, most assuredly, for the instruction of the hearers of His prayer. He thus admits that it might be reasonable to ask this: on the one hand, it must appear to the disciples a good and desirable thing, while on the other hand, by de-dining such a prayer intimates that

it would be the reverse... So, also, contrary to the deep desire which all future disciples would feel: a desire which is not to be compared, however, with that of Elijah, oppressed by despondency (1 Kings 19:4), nor to be regarded as the desire of lethargy, but such as the apostle expressed in Philippians 1:23. In their first conversion and joy almost all more or less feel a desire to be at once with Him above. And often we think concerning others, Well for them now to die, for they would be safe in Heaven! But the Lord knows better, and we should learn a better lesson from His words on this occasion. He asked not for this, then ask it not thyself, either for thyself or for others! Reply to thine own desires to depart, nevertheless, it is better, for it is more needful, to remain in the flesh and in the world. Content thyself with praying for thy preservation, until thou hast fulfilled all thy work" (Stier). Bishop Ryle has pointed out that, "Three of the only prayers not granted to saints, recorded in Scripture, are the prayers, of Moses, Elijah, Jonah to be 'taken out of the world.'" How very striking! "I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." In John 17:11 Christ had said, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me," here He amplifies for the benefit of His disciples—"keep them from the evil." The Greek word for "evil" may be translated either "evil one" or "evil thing": probably both are included. "Keep them from the author of evil, and from evil itself; from sin, from the power and snares of the Devil, from destruction, until their course is run. Satan is the author; the world is the bait; sin is the hook. Keep them from the Devil that they may not come under his power; from the world, that they may not be deceived by its allurements" (Mr. Manton). A spiritual victory over it is therefore better than a total exemption from it. Thus the Lord again teaches us here how to pray: not to be delivered from the world, but from its evil. That Christ asked the Father to "keep us" shows that it is not within our power to keep ourselves: "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet. 1:5). God has many ways of keeping us, but they may be reduced to two: by His Spirit or His providence. The one is inward, the other is outward. By the power of the Holy Spirit the evil within us is restrained: "I also withheld thee from sinning against me" (Gen. 20:6). By the Spirit grace is imparted to us: "I will put my fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me" (Jer. 32:40). By His providences He removes occasions to and objects of sin: "For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity" (Ps. 125:3). "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13). The fact that we are unable to keep ourselves should work in us the spirit of dependency. Our daily confession should be, "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee" (2 Chron. 20:12); our daily prayer should be, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The fact that God is able and willing to keep us should inspire confidence, deepen assurance, and fill us with praise: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Just as the diver, encased in his watertight suit is surrounded by water, but preserved from it, so the believer, living in this evil world is kept by the mighty power of God, His arm encircling us. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16). The same words are found in John 17:14, but in a different connection: there He was stating the chief reason why the world hated them; here He is advancing a reason why He asked the Father to keep them from evil—because "they are not of the world." The truth of this verse applies in a sevenfold way: First, Christians have a different standing from those who belong to the world: their standing is in Adam, ours in Christ; they are under condemnation, we "accepted in the beloved." Second, we possess a different nature: theirs is born of the flesh, ours "of the Spirit"; theirs is evil and corrupt, ours holy and Divine. Third, we serve a different Master: they are of their father the Devil, and the desires of their father they do; we serve the Lord Christ. Fourth, we have a different aim: theirs is to please self, ours to glorify

God. Fifth, we have a different citizenship: theirs is on earth; ours in heaven. Sixth, we live a different life: far below the standard set before us it is true: nevertheless, no Christian (in the general tenor of his conduct) goes to the same excess of sin as does the worldling. Seventh, we have a different destiny: theirs is the Lake of Fire, ours is the Father's House on High. The "world" is a system built up away from God, and from it we have been taken, delivered, separated. The Lord grant needed grace to us all that we may manifest this in our daily walk. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "It is a fact and not an obligation, though the firmest ground of obligation. They are not of the world, not merely they ought not to be; whilst if they are not, it is grievous inconsistency to seem to be of the world. It is false to our relationship for we are the Father's and given to the rejected Son who has done with the world; and if it be said that this is to bring in everlasting and heavenly relationships now be it so: this is exactly what Christianity means in principle and practice. It is faith possessing Christ who gives the believer His own place of relationship and acceptance on high, as well as of testimony apart from His rejection by the world below; which He has to make good in words and ways, in spirit and conversation, whilst waiting for the Lord... That the world improves for Christ or His own is as false as that the flesh can ameliorate. It is the light become darkness! It is the natural man knowing enough to forego what is shameless, and invested with a religious veil; it is the world essentially occupying itself with the things of God in profession, but in reality of the world where common sense suffices for its services and its worship, and the mind of Christ would be altogether inapplicable. What a triumph to the enemy! It is just what we see in Christendom; and nothing irritates so much as the refusal so to walk, worship or serve. "It does not matter how loudly you denounce or protest: if you join the world, they will not mind your words, and you are faithless to Christ. Nor does it matter how much grace and patience you show: if you keep apart as not of the world, you incur enmity and hatred, and contempt. A disciple is not above his Master, but every one that is perfected shall be as his Master. To act as not of the world is felt to be its strongest condemnation! And no meekness or love can make it palatable. Nor does God intend that it should, for He means it as part of the testimony to His Son. And as the world neither receives nor understands the Father's Word, so it hates those who have and act on that Word" (Bible Treasury). "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). On no detail in this Prayer, perhaps, has there been wider difference of opinion than on this verse. Those who regard John 17:6-19 as containing our Lord's intercession for the apostles only (among whom is Mr. John Brown as well as several other eminent expositors), understand this to mean: Consecrate them (as were Israel's priests of old) to the important mission that lies before them, i.e., by anointing them with the Holy Spirit. But against this view there are, in our judgment, insuperable objections. Not only is it, we think, abundantly clear, that the Savior was here praying for all His people, but the preposition used in this verse precludes such a thought: it is "Sanctify them through [by] thy truth." Had it been a matter of setting apart unto ministerial duties it would have been "Sanctify them for (unto) thy truth." The subject of sanctification is a deeply important one; one on which much ignorance prevails, and we are tempted to turn aside and discuss it at some length; but this would be beside the scope of our present work; suffice it now if we offer a bare outline. First of all, the word "sanctify" (so "holy") has one uniform meaning throughout Scripture, namely, to set apart; usually but not always, some one or some thing set apart unto God for His use. The word never has reference to inward cleansing, still less to the eradication of the carnal nature. Take its usage in John 17:19: "For their sake I sanctify myself." This can only mean, For their sakes I set Myself apart. In Jude 1, we read of those who are "sanctified by God the Father." The reference there is to His eternal predestination of the elect when He set them apart in Christ from our doomed race. In Hebrews 10:10 (cf. Hebrews 13:12), we read of being sanctified "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." The reference there is to our being set apart by ransom from those who are the captives of Satan. In 2 Thessalonians 2:13 and 1 Peter 1:2, we read of "sanctification of the Spirit." The reference

there is to the new birth, when He sets us apart from those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Here in John 17:17 sanctification is "by the truth," that is, by the written Word of God. The sanctification of the Father, of Jesus Christ, and of the Spirit, each have to do with that which is positional and absolute, admitting of no degrees, concerned not with a gradual process, but with what is complete and final. But "sanctification by the truth" is practical and progressive. Just so far as I walk according to God's Word shall I be separated from evil. Thus we discover a most intimate connection between these two petitions of Christ for His own: "keep them from the evil" (John 17:15), "Sanctify them by thy truth" (John 17:17): the former is secured by the latter. So also we may perceive the close relation of John 17:17 to verse 16: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world"—now "sanctify them by thy truth": because they are not of the world, cause them to walk in separation from it. "Thy word is truth." The written Word is (not "contains") unadulterated truth, because its Author cannot lie. In it there is no error. Because the Word is God's truth it is of final authority. By it every thing is to be tested. By it our thoughts are to be formed and our conduct is to be regulated. Just because God's Word is truth it sanctifies those who obey it: "according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness" (Titus 1:1). If then the Word is truth what a high value we should put upon it. If it is by the truth we are sanctified, how dearly we should prize it. How solemn too is the converse: if truth separates from evil, error conducts into evil. It was so at the beginning: it was believing the Devil's lie which plunged our race into sin and death! Then beware of error: as poison is to the body, so is error to the soul. Shun those who deny any part of God's truth as you would a deadly plague: "Take heed what ye hear" (Mark 4:24). "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world" (John 17:18). Wonderful statement is this, anticipatory of what He says in John 20:21: "as my Father hath sent me, so send I you." How evident that Christ has given us His place—His place of acceptance on high, His place of witness here below! But those who witness here below have a special character: it is as those belonging to Heaven that we are called upon to bear testimony in the world. Christ did not belong to the world, He was the Heavenly One come down to earth; so we, as identified with Him, as partakers of the heavenly calling, are now commissioned to represent Him here below. What a proof that we are not "of the world?" It is only as first "chosen out of the world," that we can be "sent into the world!" That this is not limited to the apostles is clear from 1 John 4:17, which is speaking of all believers—"as he is, so are we in this world." "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world." Christ was sent here to reveal the Father, to show forth His glory, so we are sent into the world to show forth Christ's glory, which is to the glory of the Father. Christ was sent here on an errand of mercy, to seek and to save that which was lost; so we are here as His agents, His instruments, to preach His gospel, to tell a world dead in sin of One who is mighty to save. Christ was here "full of grace and truth"; so we are to commend our Master by gracious and faithful lives. Christ was here as the Holy One in the midst of a scene of corruption; so we are to be the "salt of the earth." Christ was here as the Light; so we are to shine as lights in this dark place. Christ was furnished with the Spirit, who anointed, filled, and led Him; so we have received the Spirit, to anoint, fill and guide us. Christ was ever about His Father's business, 'pleasing not Himself, but ever making the most of His brief sojourn here below; so we are to redeem the time, to be instant in season and out of season, always abounding in the work of the Lord. It is thus that Christ is "glorified" in us (John 17:10). What a dignity this gives to our calling! "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." The connection of this verse with the previous one is most significant. There the Savior had prayed the Father to sanctify by the truth those that He was leaving behind; here He adds, I have sent them into the world. This is a plea to support His petition. It was as though He had said: "Father, Those for whom I am interceding are to be My representatives here below, as I have been Thy Representative; therefore separate them from the pollutions of this evil world, fill them with the spirit of devotedness, that they may

be examples of holy living." It is to be noted that when Christ first sent forth the Twelve, He instructed them: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5-6). But now He sends them into the "world," to preach the Gospel to every creature. The chosen nation does not occupy the place of distinctive blessing during this dispensation; Christianity bears a witness to Jew and Gentile alike. "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19). "This is the second plea advanced by Christ in support of His petition in John 17:17' He had urged their commission, now His own merit. Justice might interpose and say, 'They are unworthy'; but Christ saith, 'I sanctify myself for them.' He dealeth with the Father not only by way of entreaty, but merit; and applieth Himself not only to the goodwill of the Father, as His beloved One, but to His justice, as One that was ready to lay down His life as a satisfaction" (Mr. Manton). "And for their sakes I sanctify myself." Just as there is a double meaning to the "hour" (John 17:1), and "I come to thee" (John 17:13) etc., so is there to "I sanctify myself." Its first and most obvious reference is to the Cross. I, the great High Priest, set apart Myself for My people—I devote Myself as the Lamb of God to be slain for them, see Hebrews 10:14. In saying He did this that they might be "sanctified by the truth," He affirmed that His own official sanctification was the meritorious cause of their being sanctified practically. In declaring that He sanctified Himself, the Lord Jesus called attention to how freely and voluntarily He entered upon His sacrificial service. There was no necessity or compulsion: He laid down His life of Himself (John 10:18). This He did for "their sakes," namely, the whole company of God's elect—another sure proof that all His people are in view throughout this Prayer! "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it" (Eph. 5:25, 26)! "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Heb. 13:12)! "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." The deeper and ultimate reference of Christ in these words was to His being set apart on High as the glorified Man, the object of His people's affections, contemplation, and worship. "He set Himself apart as a heavenly man above the heavens, a glorified man in the glory, in order that all truth might shine forth in Him, in His Person, raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father—all that the Father is, being thus displayed in Him; the testimony of divine righteousness, of divine love, of divine power; the perfect model of that which man was according to the counsels of God, and as the expression of His power morally and in glory—the image of the invisible God, the Son, and in glory. Jesus set Himself apart, in this place, in order that the disciples might be sanctified by the communication to them of what He was; for this communication was the truth, and created them in the image of that which it revealed. So that it was the Father's glory revealed by Him on earth, and the glory into which He had ascended as man; for this is the complete result—the illustration in glory of the way in which He had set Himself apart for God, but on behalf of His own. Thus there is not only the forming and governing of the thoughts by the Word, setting us apart morally to God, but the blessed affections flowing from our having this truth in the Person of Christ, our hearts connected with Him in grace" (Mr. J. N. Darby). The following questions are to prepare the reader for our dosing study on John 17: — 1. How many series of sevens can you find in John 17? 2. What is the unity prayed for in verse 21? 3. What is the "glory" of verse 22? 4. What is the unity of verse 23? 5. What is the connection of verse 24? 6. Why "righteous" Father, verse 25? 7. What is the meaning of verse 26?



# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**