

JESUS' PRAYER IN JOHN SEVENTEEN

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. John chapters 14,15,16 record Jesus' last discourse with his chosen apostles before his crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, and his sending them into the world to preach the saving gospel to all men, guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit.
2. John 17 is basically his prayer to the Father on behalf of his chosen apostles whom he is sending into the world with the words the Father has given to him, which he in turn has given to them, that they are to give to all men as they shall receive them by means of the power of the Holy Spirit that Jesus will give to these chosen and sent apostles, Vv.6-21; Cf. Deut.18:18,19; Eph.3:1-5.
3. This and several other vital, significant truths revealed in this prayer of Jesus in John 17, we wish to consider in this study; such as the following:--

II. DISCUSSION

A. FIRST TAKE NOTE OF THE TRUTH JESUS TEACHES ABOUT THE "WORLD" IN THIS PRAYER TO THE FATHER.

1. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with the before the world was," V.5. (emp. mine)
2. The word "world" to which Jesus refers is from the Gr. term kosmos, which conveys the idea of "order, arrangement, ornament, or adornment," here referring specifically to "the world, i.e., the universe," Thayer, 356.
3. It suggests the design inherent in the universe, hence the result of an act of intelligent creation, -- not a random accident!
4. Jesus here declares that the universe is not eternal, for he speaks of the time "before the world was," from the Gr. term eimi, meaning to be, to exist. Cf. Gen.1:1; Exo.20:11; Heb.1:8-10.
5. Jesus Christ affirms that he was "with" (para – by the side of God) "before the world existed," and he "had" glory with him; that is, "the glory which I had with thee before the world was." Cf. Jno.1:1-3; Gen.1:1,26,27; Col.1:16.

6. The very tense of the term indicates a sustained existence—indicating that Christ ***existed eternally!***
 - a. Lenski, *The Gospel of John*, 1125, says: “It is the glory of the Godhead, the eternal, divine glory that extends back into all eternity before the cosmos or any creature or created glory existed.”
7. That glory Christ had with the Father before the world was included all the powers, prerogatives (exclusive rights and privileges) of deity, even that of creator of the universe, Jno.1:1-3; Gen.1:1,26,27; Col.1:16 – of which he “emptied (divested) himself” to become a man and suffer a vicarious death on the cross, Phil.2:5-8.

B. JESUS, IN THIS PRAYER, ACKNOWLEDGES THE TRUTH THAT THE ONLY TRUE GOD IS HIS FATHER, Vv.1-5.

1. The terms “Father” and “Son” (from the Gr. *huios*) Jesus used in this text reveal the special, unique relationship Jesus Christ had with the heavenly Father.
2. “Huios” is the term the Apostle John always used when speaking of Jesus Christ as “the only begotten” Son of God to establish a distinction between Jesus’ relationship to the Father, and that of all others who are called “sons of God,” from a different Gr. term, “*tekna*,” rather than “*huios*,” Jno.1:18;3:16,18; 1Jno.4:9.
3. This statement of Jesus in this prayer thus reflects the relationship of the human Jesus to God, the Father. Cf. Lk.1:32-35.
 - a. According to Jno.1:1-3,14:
 - (1) “In the beginning was the Word”
 - (2) “And the Word was with God”
 - (3) “And the Word was God”
 - (4) “The same was in the beginning with God”
 - (5) “And all things were made by him”
 - (6) “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...”
 - b. Therefore, according to Jno.1:14:
 - (1) He who was eternal (“the Word”) became flesh in the incarnation, not “the flesh became the Word,” as per the “Jehovah’s Witness” doctrine, who deny his eternal existence.

- (2) He who was of the very nature of God became man in the flesh, a human being, without, of course, divesting himself of his deity (only the prerogatives and innate powers of deity, Phil.2:5-8).
- (3) The idea that Christ was the “eternal Son of God” is void of support; for his sonship is inseparably linked to the incarnation when and how he became God with us, the God-man, the only begotten Son of God.

C. IN THIS PRAYER JESUS AFFIRMED THAT HIS POWER OR AUTHORITY OVER ALL FLESH ENABLING HIM TO DISCHARGE HIS FUNCTION AS THE MESSIAH WAS GIVEN OR DELEGATED TO HIM BY THE FATHER, V.2.

1. In other words, while on earth in the flesh, he did not operate or function in his capacity as the Messiah by his own innate powers and prerogatives of deity.
2. Cf. Mt.28:18-20; Eph.1:19-23; 1Pet.3:22; 1Cor.15:24-27; Deut.18:18,19.
3. He, while on earth, was in absolute subjection to his Father – doing the Father’s will, not his own!
 - a. Jno.8:28,29; 5:19,20,30,36; 9:4; 4:34; 17:4; Mt.26:39; Heb.10:9.
 - b. He even claimed to have performed his miracles by means of the power of the Holy Spirit, not by his own innate power or authority, Mt.12:28; Lk.4:18,19; 11:20; Isa.61:1-3; Ac.1:1-3; 2:22; 10:38.
4. This power or authority delegated to him by the Father enabled him to “give eternal life” to those who come to know the Father “the only true God, and Jesus Christ” sent by the Father, Vv.2,3; Jno.5:24; 10:27,28.
 - a. Jno.5:21-29; Mt.11:28-30; Jno.3:16-18,36; Heb.5:8,9; 1Jno.5:11,12; 2:24,25; Rom.8:24,25.

D. IN Vv.1-5 OF THIS PRAYER JESUS SPEAKS OF THE THREE DIFFERENT STATES OF HIS EXISTENCE, ONE THAT IS PAST, ONE THAT IS PRESENT, AND ONE THAT IS YET FUTURE, OF WHICH THREE STATES PHIL.2:5-11 SPEAK AS A FACT.

1. The first is his pre-existent state, his pre-incarnate state, i.e., the one that is past.
 - a. His pre-incarnate state is established as a fact according to Jno.1:1-3,14; 6:38,48-52; 8:58; 17:5,24; Col.1:16 (Gen.1:1,26,27); Heb.1:8-10.
 - b. In his pre-existent, pre-incarnate state, he had equality with God, the Father, Phil.2:5,6.
 - (1) Phil.2:6 (ASV): “Who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped.”
 - (2) Cf. Jno.17:5: “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had (past tense) with thee before the world was” – i.e., in my pre-incarnate state.
 - (3) This equality with God was something Christ possessed in his pre-existent state,
 - c. In his pre-incarnate state, in his state of equality with God, he had the power, the prerogatives, rights, privileges, and the glory of the Father, Jno.17:5; Jno.1:1-3.
2. The second is his incarnate state, or his state of humiliation, the voluntarily “humbling of himself.”
 - a. This is the state when he was born of the virgin Mary of the Holy Spirit, Mt.1:18-23; Lk.1:26-35; 2:1-7; Cf. Isa.7:14.
 - b. See Gal.4:4; Heb.2:9-14,16-18.
 - c. This, according to 2Cor.8:9, was when, “though he was (past tense) rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”
 - (1) This obviously speaks of his state of humiliation, his incarnate state.
 - (2) It can’t be said of God, the Father, with all the powers, prerogatives, rights, and privileges of deity, that he (God) became poor: for he is infinitely self-sufficient; he is necessarily and eternally rich in perfections and glories.
 - (a) As such, God cannot even be tempted, Jas.1:13.
 - (3) Nor can it be said of Jesus Christ, as man – God in the flesh --, that he was rich, if he were never in a

richer or more glorious state before, than while he was on earth in the flesh.

- d. His incarnate state is the state of his “humbling himself” referred to in Phil.2:5-8, which says: V.6: “Who, existing in the form of god (i.e., in his pre-existent state) counted not the being on an equality with God (i.e., having all the powers, prerogative, rights, and privileges of deity), a thing to be grasped, V.7: “But emptied (divested) himself (KJV: “But made himself of no reputation”) taking the form (or nature) of a servant (bondservant, marg.) being made (was made, KJV) in the likeness of men; V.8: “And being found in (appearing in) fashion as a man, he humbled (abased) himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.”
- (1) As to his pre-existent state, when he existed in the form of God, with equality with God, he didn't count that state and that equality with God “a thing to be grasped,” or a prize or a treasure to be held fast, or to be forcibly retained, or coveted, or something to cling to. See Vine, III, 215.
 - (2) Instead thereof, he emptied or divested himself of that equality, voluntarily gave up that equality, with those powers, prerogatives, rights, and privileges of deity making himself of no reputation, taking upon himself the form of a servant, made in the likeness of men, to suffer death on the cross, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God (Cf. 1Pet.3:18), thus he is set forth as the supreme example of humility and self-renunciation!
- e. But, of course, he who was eternal became flesh; he who was of the very nature of God became man without divesting himself of his deity – he was Emmanuel, ‘God with us’ – He was both God and man!
- f. In his state of humiliation:
- (1) He could be and often was tempted in all points like as we are, Mt.4:1-10; Heb.2:17,18; 4:15.
 - (a) Note this: If in this state as God with us, or God in the flesh, as a man, he still retained all the powers, prerogatives, rights,

privileges, glory, and innate holiness of deity, such as the Father always possessed, then he could not have been tempted;

(b) For God, the Father, with all such, could not be tempted, Jas.1:13.

(2). He suffered shame and death, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, Heb.2:9,10; 5:8,9; 12:2,3.

(3) He set the perfect example for us to follow in a life of obedience and patience under temptation and suffering which he faced as a man, yet without sin.

(4) He fulfilled the divine, foreordained plan and purpose of God for our eternal redemption, Ac.2:22-24,29-36; Heb.10:1-10 (Psa.40:6-8); 1Pet.1:18-20; Isa.53; Heb.9:11-17,26,27; Rom.3:19-26.

3. The third state alluded to in Jno.17:5 is the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

a. V.5: “And now, O Father, glorify thou men with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”

(1) Here Jesus first refers to the fact of his pre-existent, pre-incarnate state, with the Father prior to his second state, his present earthly, incarnate state.

(2) Secondly, he refers to and longs for his third state, his exaltation to the right hand of God.

(3) This third state is affirmed as a fact presently existing in Phil.2:9-11. Cf. Rom.14:11,12; Ac.2:22-36; 17:31; Eph.1:19-23.

b. This third state consists of his being raised from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in taking his seat on David's throne in heaven, at the right hand of God, in his being given all authority in heaven and in earth, and in being given authority to judge and execute judgment upon all men at his 2nd Coming at the resurrection of the dead at the last day, Mt.28:18-20; Jno.5:22-29; Ac.17:31; Rom.2:16; 2Tim.4:1; 2Cor.5:10; Rom.14:11,12; Phil.2:9-11; Cf. 1Cor.15:19-27.

(1) See Jno.6:39,40,44,54; 11:23,24; 12:48.

E. JESUS DECLARES THAT THE WORD THAT HE GAVE TO THE SPIRIT-FILLED, SPIRIT-GUIDED APOSTLES WHOM HE HAS SELECTED AND IS TO SEND INTO THE WORLD TO PREACH TO ALL MAN WAS GIVEN TO HIM BY THE FATHER, Vv.7,8,14,18.

1. Cf. Deut.18:18,19;Ac.3:19-26.
2. The Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, even the Spirit of truth, will teach them “all things, and bring all things” to their remembrance Jesus has said to them while he was with them before his ascension, and will guide them into “all truth” after his ascension, Jno.14:26; 15:26; 16:7-15. Cf. Lk.24:44-49; Ac.1:1-8.
3. They received that word by means of the Holy Spirit beginning on Pentecost, Ac.2:1-4; Cf. 1Jno.1:1-3; Eph.3:1-5; Gal.1:6-12.

F. JESUS, IN THIS PRAYER, NOT ONLY PRAYED FOR THE UNITY OF ALL BELIEVERS, BUT REVEALED THE ONE AND ONLY BASIS FOR, OR THE ONE AND ONLY MEANS BY WHICH HIS DESIRED UNITY OF BELIEVERS IS TO BE OBTAINED, Vv.18-21.

1. By and through the word the Spirit-filled, Spirit-guided, Spirit-empowered Apostles would preach as he commissioned, Vv.7,8,14.
2. See Mt.28:18-20; Mk.16:14-20; Lk.24:36-49; Jno.20:19-23.
3. Ac.1:1-8; 2:1-4,14-41; 1Jno.1:1-5.
4. Gal.1:6-12; Eph.3:1-5.

III. CONCLUSION

1. These great truths revealed in this prayer of Jesus on behalf of his chosen Apostles leaves no doubt that they would be fully prepared for the work they were to do when Jesus sent them into the world as his ambassadors.
2. Such should leave no doubt in our mind that God, by this means, has revealed unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, whereby exceeding great and precious promises are made available to us, as Peter affirms in 2Pet.1:1-4.