

The Gospel of John 17:1-13

I The Son to Be Glorified That the Father May Be Glorified

- A. The subject of the Lord's prayer in this chapter is glorification. He was God incarnated in the flesh, and His flesh was a tabernacle in which God could dwell on earth (1:14). His divine element was confined in His humanity, just as God's glory had been concealed within the tabernacle. Once, on the mountain of transfiguration, His divine element was released from within His flesh and expressed in glory, being seen by the three disciples (Matt.17:1-4; John 1:14). But then it was concealed again in His flesh. Before this prayer He predicted that He would be glorified and that the Father would be glorified in Him (12:23; 13:31-32). Now He was about to pass through death so that the concealing shell of His humanity might be broken and His divine element, His divine life, might be released. Also, He would resurrect, that He might uplift His humanity into the divine element and that His divine element might be expressed, with the result that His entire being; His divinity and His humanity, would be glorified. The Father would thus be glorified in Him. Hence, He prayed for this.
- B. The Lord's prayer about glorification, is fulfilled in three stages. **First**, it was fulfilled in His resurrection, in that His divine element, His divine life, was released from within His humanity into His many believers (12:23-24), and His whole being, including His humanity, was brought into glory (Luke 24:26), and in that the Father's divine element was expressed in His resurrection and glorification. In His resurrection, God answered and fulfilled His prayer (Acts 3:13-15). **Second**, it has been fulfilled in the assembly, in that as His resurrection life has been expressed through His many members, He has been glorified in them, and the Father has been glorified in Him through the assembly (Eph. 3:21; 1 Tim. 3:15-16). **Third**, it will ultimately be fulfilled in the New Jerusalem, in that He will be fully expressed in glory, and God will be glorified in Him through the holy city for eternity (Rev. 21:11, 23-24). In praying in this way, the Lord unveiled His person, His deity; He is the same as the Father in the divine glory.
- C. The work of the Lord is to give eternal life. The Lord has the Father's authority over all mankind that He may give eternal life, not to all mankind but only to those whom the Father has given Him—the Father's chosen ones. Eternal life is the divine life with a special function—to know God and Christ (cf. Matt.11:27). God and Christ are divine. To know the divine person, we need the divine life. Since the believers are born of the divine life, they know God and Christ (Heb. 8:11; Phil. 3:10).
- D. This word in v.5 strengthens the indication in v.1, concerning the deity of the Lord's person. He had the divine glory along with the Father before the world was, in eternity past; hence, He should be glorified now with that glory along with the Father. The Lord participates in the divine glory, not by Himself, but along with the Father, for He and the Father are one (10:30).

II The Believers to Be Built Up Into One-In the Father's Name By the Eternal Life.

- A. The phrase "Your name", in v. 6 and in v.26, means the very name "Father." The name "God" and the name "Jehovah" were adequately revealed to man in the Old Testament, but the name "Father" was not, though it was mentioned briefly in Isa.9:6; 63:16; 64:8. The Son worked in the Father's name (5:43; 10:25) to manifest the Father to the men whom the Father gave Him and to make the Father's name known to them (v. 26). That name reveals the Father as the source of life (5:26) for the propagation and multiplication of life. Many sons would be born of the Father (1:12-13) to express the Father. Hence, the Father's name is very much related to the divine life. The Father's words are of two kinds: the constant word (v.6) and the instant words (v.8) Both are used by the Lord to impart eternal life to the believers, who receive both kinds of words.
- B. What is the revelation behind the name Father? When I say, "my Father," I mean that I have His life and that I was born of Him. God is the Father because He begets many people with His life, make them His children and His sons. In Matthew the Lord taught His disciples to call God Father, saying, "Our Father who is in the heavens" (Matt.6:9). When we call God our Father, we must realize that He is our genuine Father. He is our Father in Life, our genuine Father. We call Him Father because we were born of Him and have His life. How sweet it is to call God our Father! Both Rom.8:15 and Gal.4:6 speak of crying, "Abba, Father." It is so sweet to call upon God as our Father, saying, "Abba, Father." When you sense this sweetness, you know that you are His child and that He truly is your Father in life.
- C. Since the disciples expressed the Lord, He was glorified in them. However, the Son was leaving and his believers were remaining in the world. So, the Son prayed that the holy Father would keep them in His name in oneness. To be kept in the Father's name is to be kept by His life, because only those who are born of the Father and have the Father's life can participate in the Father's name. The Son has given the Father's life to those whom the Father has given Him (v.2); hence, they share the Father's name by being kept in it, and they are one in it. The first aspect of this oneness, that is, the first aspect of the building up of the believers, is the oneness in the Father's name, by His divine life. In this aspect of oneness the believers, born of the Father's life, enjoy the Father's name, that is, the Father Himself, as the factor of their oneness.
- D. The Son's believers are still in the world. They need to be kept, that is, separated, from the world that they might be sanctified, made holy. In verse 11 the Son prays that the Father, who is holy, will do this. In verse 11 the Lord addresses His Father as "Holy Father." The Father's life is a holy life, a life that is separated from the world. Although we have this life, if we stay far away from the Holy Father, we shall have problems. We all need to be kept in the Father's name by the life of the Holy Father. The holy life of the Holy Father alone can make us holy. (Compare with Mtt.5:48)